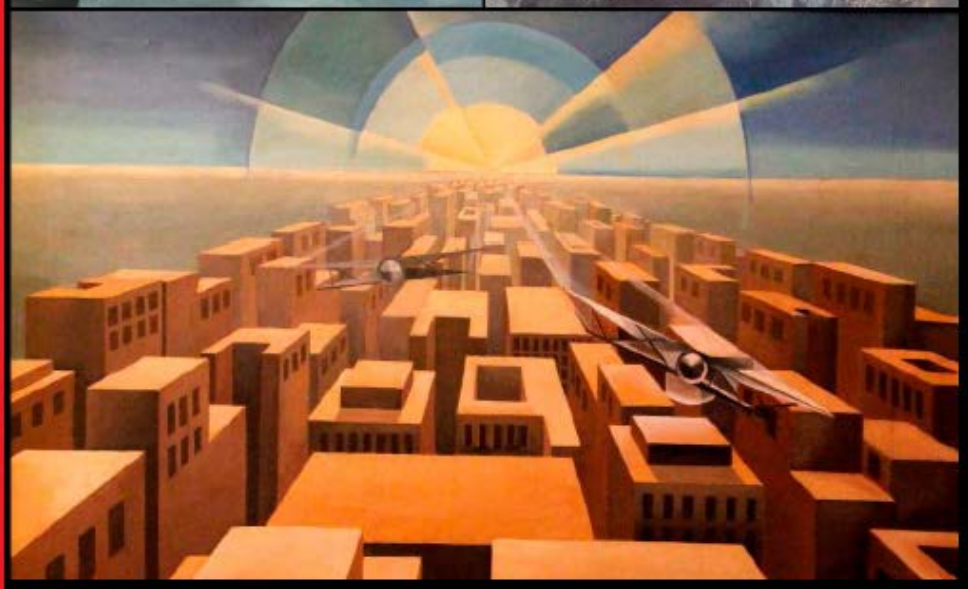
FASCISM

Selected Works



For the Man to come

DOCTRINE OF FASCISM

DVX

REFUTATION OF ECO'S 14 POINTS

ORIGINS AND DOCTRINE OF FASCISM
AND SELECTED TEXTS

LAST TESTAMENT AND THOUGHTS
OF BENITO MUSSOLINI

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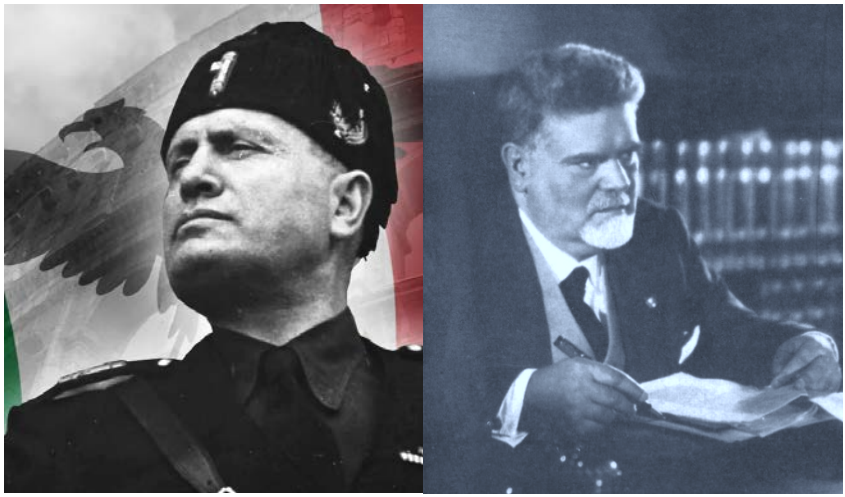
The Doctrine of Fascism

Benito Mussolini & Giovanni Gentile

(1932)



This article, co-written by Giovanni Gentile is considered the most complete articulation of Mussolini's political views. This is the only complete official translation we know of on the web, copied directly from an official Fascist government publication of 1935, Fascism Doctrine and Institutions, by Benito Mussolini, Ardita Publishers, Rome, pages 7-42. This translation includes all the footnotes from the original.

Like all sound political conceptions, Fascism is action and it is thought; action in which doctrine is immanent, and doctrine arising from a given system of historical forces in which it is inserted, and working on them from within (1). It has therefore a form correlated to contingencies of time and space; but it has also an ideal content which makes it an expression of truth in the higher region of the history of thought (2). There is no way of exercising a spiritual influence in the world as a human will dominating the will of others, unless one has a conception both of the transient and the specific reality on which that action is to be exercised, and of the permanent and universal reality in which the transient dwells and has its being. To know men one must know man; and to know man one must be acquainted with reality and its laws. There can be no conception of the State which is not fundamentally a conception of life: philosophy or intuition, system of ideas evolving within the framework of logic or concentrated in a

vision or a faith, but always, at least potentially, an organic conception of the world.

Thus many of the practical expressions of Fascism such as party organization, system of education, and discipline can only be understood when considered in relation to its general attitude toward life. A spiritual attitude (3). Fascism sees in the world not only those superficial, material aspects in which man appears as an individual, standing by himself, self-centered, subject to natural law, which instinctively urges him toward a life of selfish momentary pleasure; it sees not only the individual but the nation and the country; individuals and generations bound together by a moral law, with common traditions and a mission which suppressing the instinct for life closed in a brief circle of pleasure, builds up a higher life, founded on duty, a life free from the limitations of time and space, in which the individual, by self-sacrifice, the renunciation of self-interest, by death itself, can achieve that purely spiritual existence in which his value as a man consists.

The conception is therefore a spiritual one, arising from the general reaction of the century against the materialistic positivism of the XIXth century. Anti-positivistic but positive; neither skeptical nor agnostic; neither pessimistic nor supinely optimistic as are, generally speaking, the doctrines (all negative) which place the center of life outside man; whereas, by the exercise of his free will, man can and must create his own world.

Fascism wants man to be active and to engage in action with all his energies; it wants him to be manfully aware of the difficulties besetting him and ready to face them. It conceives of life as a struggle in which it behooves a man to win for himself a really worthy place, first of all by fitting himself (physically, morally, intellectually) to become the implement required for winning it. As for the individual, so for the nation, and so for mankind (4). Hence the high value of culture in all its forms (artistic, religious, scientific) (5) and the outstanding importance of education. Hence also the essential value of work, by which man subjugates nature and creates the human world (economic, political, ethical, and intellectual).

This positive conception of life is obviously an ethical one. It invests the whole field of reality as well as the human activities which master it. No action is exempt from moral judgment; no activity can be despoiled of the value which a moral purpose confers on all things. Therefore life, as conceived of by the Fascist, is serious, austere, and religious; all its manifestations are poised in a world sustained by moral forces and subject to spiritual responsibilities. The Fascist disdains an “easy " life (6).

The Fascist conception of life is a religious one (7), in which man is viewed in his immanent relation to a higher law, endowed with an objective will transcending the individual and raising him to conscious membership of a spiritual society. "Those who perceive nothing beyond opportunistic considerations in the religious policy of the Fascist regime fail to realize that Fascism is not only a system of government but also and above all a system of thought.

In the Fascist conception of history, man is man only by virtue of the spiritual process to which he contributes as a member of the family, the social group, the nation, and in function of history to which all nations bring their contribution. Hence the great value of tradition in records, in language, in customs, in the rules of social life (8). Outside history man is a nonentity. Fascism is therefore opposed to all individualistic abstractions based on eighteenth century materialism; and it is opposed to all Jacobinistic utopias and innovations. It does not believe in the possibility of "happiness" on earth as conceived by the economistic literature of the XVIIIth century, and it therefore rejects the theological notion that at some future time the human family will secure a final settlement of all its difficulties. This notion runs counter to experience which teaches that life is in continual flux and in process of evolution. In politics Fascism aims at realism; in practice it desires to deal only with those problems which are the spontaneous product of historic conditions and which find or suggest their own solutions (9). Only by entering in to the process of reality and taking possession of the forces at work within it, can man act on man and on nature (10).

Anti-individualistic, the Fascist conception of life stresses the importance of the State and accepts the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State, which stands for the conscience and the universal, will of man as a historic entity (11). It is opposed to classical liberalism which arose as a reaction to absolutism and exhausted its historical function when the State became the expression of the conscience and will of the people.

Liberalism denied the State in the name of the individual; Fascism reasserts the rights of the State as expressing the real essence of the individual (12). And if liberty is to he the attribute of living men and not of abstract dummies invented by individualistic liberalism, then Fascism stands for liberty, and for the only liberty worth having, the liberty of the State and of the individual within the State (13). The Fascist conception of the State is all embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value. Thus understood, Fascism, is totalitarian, and the Fascist State - a synthesis and a unit inclusive of all values - interprets, develops, and potentates the whole life of a people (14).

No individuals or groups (political parties, cultural associations, economic unions, social classes) outside the State (15). Fascism is therefore opposed to Socialism to which unity within the State (which amalgamates classes into a single economic and ethical reality) is unknown, and which sees in history nothing but the class struggle. Fascism is likewise opposed to trade unionism as a class weapon. But when brought within the orbit of the State, Fascism recognizes the real needs which gave rise to socialism and trade unionism, giving them due weight in the guild or corporative system in which divergent interests are coordinated and harmonized in the unity of the State (16).

Grouped according to their several interests, individuals form classes; they form trade-unions when organized according to their several economic activities; but first and foremost they form the State, which is no mere matter of numbers, the suns of the individuals forming the majority. Fascism is therefore opposed to that form of democracy which equates a nation to the majority, lowering it to the level of the largest number (17); but it is the purest form of democracy if the nation be considered as it should be from the point of view of quality rather than quantity, as an idea, the mightiest because the most ethical, the most coherent, the truest, expressing itself in a people as the conscience and will of the few, if not, indeed, of one, and ending to express itself in the conscience and the will of the mass, of the whole group ethnically molded by natural and historical conditions into a nation, advancing, as one conscience and one will, along the self same line of development and spiritual formation (18). Not a race, nor a geographically defined region, but a people, historically perpetuating itself; a multitude unified by an idea and imbued with the will to live, the will to power, self-consciousness, personality (19).

In so far as it is embodied in a State, this higher personality becomes a nation. It is not the nation which generates the State; that is an antiquated naturalistic concept which afforded a basis for XIXth century publicity in favor of national governments. Rather is it the State which creates the nation, conferring volition and therefore real life on a people made aware of their moral unity.

The right to national independence does not arise from any merely literary and idealistic form of self-consciousness; still less from a more or less passive and unconscious *de facto* situation, but from an active, self-conscious, political will expressing itself in action and ready to prove its rights. It arises, in short, from the existence, at least *in fieri*, of a State. Indeed, it is the State which, as the expression of a universal ethical will, creates the right to national independence (20).

A nation, as expressed in the State, is a living, ethical entity only in so far as it is progressive. Inactivity is death. Therefore the State is

not only Authority which governs and confers legal form and spiritual value on individual, Hills, but it is also Power which makes its will felt and respected beyond its own frontiers, thus affording practical proof of the universal character of the decisions necessary to ensure its development. This implies organization and expansion, potential if not actual. Thus the State equates itself to the will of man, whose development cannot he checked by obstacles and which, by achieving self-expression, demonstrates its infinity (21).

The Fascist State , as a higher and more powerful expression of personality, is a force, but a spiritual one. It sums up all the manifestations of the moral and intellectual life of man. Its functions cannot therefore be limited to those of enforcing order and keeping the peace, as the liberal doctrine had it. It is no mere mechanical device for defining the sphere within which the individual may duly exercise his supposed rights. The Fascist State is an inwardly accepted standard and rule of conduct, a discipline of the whole person; it permeates the will no less than the intellect. It stands for a principle which becomes the central motive of man as a member of civilized society, sinking deep down into his personality; it dwells in the heart of the man of action and of the thinker, of the artist and of the man of science: soul of the soul (22).

Fascism, in short, is not only a law-giver and a founder of institutions, but an educator and a promoter of spiritual life. It aims at refashioning not only the forms of life but their content - man, his character, and his faith. To achieve this propose it enforces discipline and uses authority, entering into the soul and ruling with undisputed sway. Therefore it has chosen as its emblem the Lictor's rods, the symbol of unity, strength, and justice.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DOCTRINE

When in the now distant March of 1919, speaking through the columns of the *Popolo d'Italia I* summoned to Milan the surviving interventionists who had intervened, and who had followed me ever since the foundation of the *Fasci* of revolutionary action in January 1915, I had in mind no specific doctrinal program. The only doctrine of which I had practical experience was that of socialism, from 1903-04 until the winter of 1914 - nearly a decade. My experience was that both of a follower and a leader - but it was not doctrinal experience. My doctrine during that period had been the doctrine of action. A uniform, universally accepted doctrine of Socialism had not existed since 1905, when the revisionist movement, headed by Bernstein, arose in Germany, countered by the formation, in the see-saw of tendencies, of

a left revolutionary movement which in Italy never quitted the field of phrases, whereas, in the case of Russian socialism, it became the prelude to Bolshevism.

Reformism, revolutionism, centrism, the very echo of that terminology is dead, while in the great river of Fascism one can trace currents which had their source in Sorel, Peguy, Lagardelle of the *Movement Socialists,* and in the cohort of Italian syndicalist who from 1904 to 1914 brought a new note into the Italian socialist environment - previously emasculated and chloroformed by fornicating with Giolitti's party - a note sounded in Olivetti's *Pagine Libere,* Orano's *Lupa,* Enrico Leone's *Divenirs Socials.*

When the war ended in 1919 Socialism, as a doctrine, was already dead; it continued to exist only as a grudge, especially in Italy where its only chance lay in inciting to reprisals against the men who had willed the war and who were to be made to pay for it.

The *Popolo d'Italia* described itself in its subtitle as the daily organ of fighters and producers. The word producer was already the expression of a mental trend. Fascism was not the nursling of a doctrine previously drafted at a desk; it was born of the need of action, and was action; it was not a party but, in the first two years, an anti-party and a movement. The name I gave the organization fixed its character.

Yet if anyone cares to reread the now crumpled sheets of those days giving an account of the meeting at which the Italian *Fasci di combattimento* were founded, he will find not a doctrine but a series of pointers, forecasts, hints which, when freed from the inevitable matrix of contingencies, were to develop in a few years time into a series of doctrinal positions entitling Fascism to rank as a political doctrine differing from all others, past or present.

"If the bourgeoisie - I then said - believe that they have found in us their lightening-conductors, they arc mistaken. We must go towards the people... We wish the working classes to accustom themselves to the responsibilities of management so that they may realize that it is no easy matter to run a business... We will fight both technical and spiritual rear-guardism... Now that the succession of the regime is open we must not be fainthearted. We must rush forward; if the present regime is to be superseded we must take its place. The right of succession is ours, for we urged the country to enter the war and we led it to victory... The existing forms of political representation cannot satisfy us; we want direst representation of the several interests... It' may be objected that this program implies a return to the guilds *(corporazioni). No matter!. I* therefore hope this assembly will accept the economic claims advanced by national syndicalism …

Is it not strange that from the very first day, at Piazza San Sepolcro, the word "guild" *(corporazione)* was pronounced, a word which, as the Revolution developed, was to express one of the basic legislative and social creations of the regime?

The years preceding the March on Rome cover a period during which the need of action forbade delay and careful doctrinal elaborations. Fighting was going on in the towns and villages. There were discussions but... there was something more sacred and more important... death... Fascists knew how to die. A doctrine - fully elaborated, divided up into chapters and paragraphs with annotations, may have been lacking, but it was replaced by something far m :) re decisive, - by a faith. All the same, if with the help of books, articles, resolutions passed at congresses, major and minor speeches, anyone should care to revive the memory of those days, he will find, provided he knows how to seek and select, that the doctrinal foundations were laid while the battle was still raging. Indeed, it was during those years that Fascist thought armed, refined itself, and proceeded ahead with its organization. The problems of the individual and the State; the problems of authority and liberty; political, social, and more especially national problems were discussed; the conflict with liberal, democratic, socialistic, Masonic doctrines and with those of the *Partito Popolare,* was carried on at the same time as the punitive expeditions.

Nevertheless, the lack of a formal system was used by disingenuous adversaries as an argument for proclaiming Fascism incapable of elaborating a doctrine at the very time when that doctrine was being formulated - no matter how tumultuously, - first, as is the case with all new ideas, in the guise of violent dogmatic negations; then in the more positive guise of constructive theories, subsequently incorporated, in 1926, 1927, and 1928, in the laws and institutions of the regime.

Fascism is now clearly defined not only as a regime but as a doctrine. This means that Fascism, exercising its critical faculties on itself and on others, has studied from its own special standpoint and judged by its own standards all the problems affecting the material and intellectual interests now causing such grave anxiety to the nations of the world, and is ready to deal with them by its own policies.

First of all, as regards the future development of mankind, and quite apart from all present political considerations. Fascism does not, generally speaking, believe in the possibility or utility of perpetual peace. It therefore discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contradistinction to self-sacrifice. War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it. All other tests are

substitutes which never place a man face to face with himself before the alternative of life or death. Therefore all doctrines which postulate peace at all costs are incompatible with Fascism. Equally foreign to the spirit of Fascism, even if accepted as useful in meeting special political situations - are all internationalist or League superstructures which, as history shows, crumble to the ground whenever the heart of nations is deeply stirred by sentimental, idealistic or practical considerations. Fascism carries this anti-pacifistic attitude into the life of the individual. " I don't care a damn„ *(me ne frego)* - the proud motto of the fighting squads scrawled by a wounded man on his bandages, is not only an act of philosophic stoicism, it sums up a doctrine which is not merely political: it is evidence of a fighting spirit which accepts all risks. It signifies new style of Italian life. The Fascist accepts and loves life; he rejects and despises suicide as cowardly. Life as he understands it means duty, elevation, conquest; life must be lofty and full, it must be lived for oneself but above all for others, both near bye and far off, present and future.

The population policy of the regime is the consequence of these premises. The Fascist loves his neighbor, but the word neighbor "does not stand for some vague and unseizable conception. Love of one's neighbor does not exclude necessary educational severity; still less does it exclude differentiation and rank. Fascism will have nothing to do with universal embraces; as a member of the community of nations it looks other peoples straight in the eyes; it is vigilant and on its guard; it follows others in all their manifestations and notes any changes in their interests; and it does not allow itself to be deceived by mutable and fallacious appearances.

Such a conception of life makes Fascism the resolute negation of the doctrine underlying so-called scientific and Marxian socialism, the doctrine of historic materialism which would explain the history of mankind in terms of the class struggle and by changes in the processes and instruments of production, to the exclusion of all else.

That the vicissitudes of economic life - discoveries of raw materials, new technical processes, and scientific inventions - have their importance, no one denies; but that they suffice to explain human history to the exclusion of other factors is absurd. Fascism believes now and always in sanctity and heroism, that is to say in acts in which no economic motive - remote or immediate - is at work. Having denied historic materialism, which sees in men mere puppets on the surface of history, appearing and disappearing on the crest of the waves while in the depths the real directing forces move and work, Fascism also denies the immutable and irreparable character of the class struggle which is the natural outcome of this economic conception of history; above all it

denies that the class struggle is the preponderating agent in social transformations.

Having thus struck a blow at socialism in the two main points of its doctrine, all that remains of it is the sentimental aspiration-old as humanity itself-toward social relations in which the sufferings and sorrows of the humbler folk will be alleviated. But here again Fascism rejects the economic interpretation of felicity as something to be secured socialistically, almost automatically, at a given stage of economic evolution when all will be assured a maximum of material comfort. Fascism denies the materialistic conception of happiness as a possibility, and abandons it to the economists of the mid-eighteenth century. This means that Fascism denies the equation: well-being = happiness, which sees in men mere animals, content when they can feed and fatten, thus reducing them to a vegetative existence pure and simple.

After socialism, Fascism trains its guns on the whole block of democratic ideologies, and rejects both their premises and their practical applications and implements. Fascism denies that numbers, as such, can be the determining factor in human society; it denies the right of numbers to govern by means of periodical consultations; it asserts the irremediable and fertile and beneficent inequality of men who cannot be leveled by any such mechanical and extrinsic device as universal suffrage. Democratic regimes may be described as those under which the people are, from time to time, deluded into the belief that they exercise sovereignty, while all the time real sovereignty resides in and is exercised by other and sometimes irresponsible and secret forces. Democracy is a kingless regime infested by many kings who are sometimes more exclusive, tyrannical, and destructive than one, even if he be a tyrant. This explains why Fascism - although, for contingent reasons, it was republican in tendency prior to 1922 - abandoned that stand before the March on Rome, convinced that the form of government is no longer a matter of preeminent importance, and because the study of past and present monarchies and past and present republics shows that neither monarchy nor republic can be judged *sub specie aeternitatis,* but that each stands for a form of government expressing the political evolution, the history, the traditions, and the psychology of a given country.

Fascism has outgrown the dilemma: monarchy v. republic, over which democratic regimes too long dallied, attributing all insufficiencies to the former and portraying the latter as a regime of perfection, whereas experience teaches that some republics are inherently reactionary and absolutist while some monarchies accept the most daring political and social experiments.

In one of his philosophic Meditations Renan - who had pre-Fascist intuitions remarks, "Reason and science are the products of mankind, but it is chimerical to seek reason directly for the people and through the people. It is not essential to the existence of reason that all should be familiar with it; and even if all had to be initiated, this could not be achieved through democracy which seems fated to lead to the extinction of all arduous forms of culture and all highest forms of learning. The maxim that society exists only for the well-being and freedom of the individuals composing it does not seem to be in conformity with nature's plans, which care only for the species and seem ready to sacrifice the individual. It is much to be feared that the last word of democracy thus understood (and let me hasten to add that it is susceptible of a different interpretation) would be a form of society in which a degenerate mass would have no thought beyond that of enjoying the ignoble pleasures of the vulgar ".

In rejecting democracy Fascism rejects the absurd conventional lie of political equalitarianism, the habit of collective irresponsibility, the myth of felicity and indefinite progress. But if democracy be understood as meaning a regime in which the masses are not driven back to the margin of the State, and then the writer of these pages has already defined Fascism as an organized, centralized, authoritarian democracy.

Fascism is definitely and absolutely opposed to the doctrines of liberalism, both in the political and the economic sphere. The importance of liberalism in the XIXth century should not be exaggerated for present day polemical purposes, nor should we make of one of the many doctrines which flourished in that century a religion for mankind for the present and for all time to come.

Liberalism really flourished for fifteen years only. It arose in 1830 as a reaction to the Holy Alliance which tried to force Europe to recede further back than 1789; it touched its zenith in 1848 when even Pius IXth was a liberal. Its decline began immediately after that year. If 1848 was a year of light and poetry, 1849 was a year of darkness and tragedy. The Roman Republic was killed by a sister republic, that of France . In that same year Marx, in his famous Communist Manifesto, launched the gospel of socialism.

In 1851 Napoleon III made his illiberal *coup d'etat* and ruled France until 1870 when he was turned out by a popular rising following one of the severest military defeats known to history. The victor was Bismarck who never even knew the whereabouts of liberalism and its prophets. It is symptomatic that throughout the XIXth century the religion of liberalism was completely unknown to so highly civilized a people as the Germans but for one parenthesis which has

been described as the “ridiculous parliament of Frankfort " which lasted just one season. Germany attained her national unity outside liberalism and in opposition to liberalism, a doctrine which seems foreign to the German temperament, essentially monarchical, whereas liberalism is the historic and logical anteroom to anarchy. The three stages in the making of German unity were the three wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870, led by such "liberals" as Moltke and Bismarck. And in the building up of Italian unity liberalism played a very minor part when compared to the contribution made by Mazzini and Garibaldi who were not liberals. But for the intervention of the illiberal Napoleon III we should not have had Lombardy, and without that of the illiberal Bismarck at Sadowa and at Sedan very probably we should not have had Venetia in 1866 and in 1870 we should not have entered Rome. The years going from 1870 to 1915 cover a period which marked, even in the opinion of the high priests of the new creed, the twilight of their religion, attacked by decadentism in literature and by activism in practice. Activism: that is to say nationalism, futurism, Fascism.

The liberal century, after piling up innumerable Gordian Knots, tried to cut them with the sword of the world war. Never has any religion claimed so cruel a sacrifice. Were the Gods of liberalism thirsting for blood?

Now liberalism is preparing to close the doors of its temples, deserted by the peoples who feel that the agnosticism it professed in the sphere of economics and the indifferentism of which it has given proof in the sphere of politics and morals, would lead the world to ruin in the future as they have done in the past.

This explains why all the political experiments of our day are anti-liberal, and it is supremely ridiculous to endeavor on this account to put them outside the pale of history, as though history were a preserve set aside for liberalism and its adepts; as though liberalism were the last word in civilization beyond which no one can go.

The Fascist negation of socialism, democracy, liberalism, should not, however, be interpreted as implying a desire to drive the world backwards to positions occupied prior to 1789, a year commonly referred to as that which opened the demo-liberal century. History does not travel backwards. The Fascist doctrine has not taken De Maistre as its prophet. Monarchical absolutism is of the past, and so is ecclesiolatry. Dead and done for are feudal privileges and the division of society into closed, uncommunicating castes. Neither has the Fascist conception of authority anything in common with that of a police ridden State.

A party governing a nation in a “totalitarian" manner is a new departure in history. There are no points of reference nor of

comparison. From beneath the ruins of liberal, socialist, and democratic doctrines, Fascism extracts those elements which are still vital. It preserves what may be described as "the acquired facts" of history; it rejects all else. That is to say, it rejects the idea of a doctrine suited to all times and to all people. Granted that the XIXth century was the century of socialism, liberalism, democracy, this does not mean that the XXth century must also be the century of socialism, liberalism, democracy. Political doctrines pass; nations remain. We are free to believe that this is the century of authority, a century tending to the " right ", a Fascist century. If the XIXth century was the century of the individual (liberalism implies individualism) we are free to believe that this is the "collective" century, and therefore the century of the State. It is quite logical for a new doctrine to make use of the still vital elements of other doctrines.

No doctrine was ever born quite new and bright and unheard of. No doctrine can boast absolute originality. It is always connected, it only historically, with those which preceded it and those which will follow it. Thus the scientific socialism of Marx links up to the utopian socialism of the Fouriers, the Owens, the Saint-Simons ; thus the liberalism of the XIXth century traces its origin back to the illuminist movement of the XVIIIth, and the doctrines of democracy to those of the Encyclopaedists. All doctrines aim at directing the activities of men towards a given objective; but these activities in their turn react on the doctrine, modifying and adjusting it to new needs, or outstripping it. A doctrine must therefore be a vital act and not a verbal display. Hence the pragmatic strain in Fascism, it’s will to power, its will to live, its attitude toward violence, and its value.

The keystone of the Fascist doctrine is its conception of the State, of its essence, its functions, and its aims. For Fascism the State is absolute, individuals and groups relative. Individuals and groups are admissible in so far as they come within the State. Instead of directing the game and guiding the material and moral progress of the community, the liberal State restricts its activities to recording results. The Fascist State is wide awake and has a will of its own. For this reason it can be described as " ethical ".

At the first quinquennial assembly of the regime, in 1929, I said “The Fascist State is not a night watchman, solicitous only of the personal safety of the citizens; not is it organized exclusively for the purpose of guarantying a certain degree of material prosperity and relatively peaceful conditions of life, a board of directors would do as much. Neither is it exclusively political, divorced from practical realities and holding itself aloof from the multifarious activities of the citizens and the nation. The State, as conceived and realized by

Fascism, is a spiritual and ethical entity for securing the political, juridical, and economic organization of the nation, an organization which in its origin and growth is a manifestation of the spirit. The State guarantees the internal and external safety of the country, but it also safeguards and transmits the spirit of the people, elaborated down the ages in its language, its customs, its faith. The State is not only the present; it is also the past and above all the future. Transcending the individual's brief spell of life, the State stands for the immanent conscience of the nation. The forms in which it finds expression change, but the need for it remains. The State educates the citizens to civism, makes them aware of their mission, urges them to unity; its justice harmonizes their divergent interests; it transmits to future generations the conquests of the mind in the fields of science, art, law, human solidarity; it leads men up from primitive tribal life to that highest manifestation of human power, imperial rule. The State hands down to future generations the memory of those who laid down their lives to ensure its safety or to obey its laws; it sets up as examples and records for future ages the names of the captains who enlarged its territory and of the men of genius who have made it famous. Whenever respect for the State declines and the disintegrating and centrifugal tendencies of individuals and groups prevail, nations are headed for decay".

Since 1929 economic and political development have everywhere emphasized these truths. The importance of the State is rapidly growing. The so-called crisis can only be settled by State action and within the orbit of the State. Where are the shades of the Jules Simons who, in the early days of liberalism proclaimed that the "State should endeavor to render itself useless and prepare to hand in its resignation "? Or of the MacCullochs who, in the second half of last century, urged that the State should desist from governing too much? And what of the English Bentham who considered that all industry asked of government was to be left alone, and of the German Humbolt who expressed the opinion that the best government was a lazy " one? What would they say now to the unceasing, inevitable, and urgently requested interventions of government in business? It is true that the second generation of economists was less uncompromising in this respect than the first, and that even Adam Smith left the door ajar - however cautiously - for government intervention in business.

If liberalism spells individualism, Fascism spells government. The Fascist State is, however, a unique and original creation. It is not reactionary but revolutionary, for it anticipates the solution of certain universal problems which have been raised elsewhere, in the political field by the splitting up of parties, the usurpation of power by

parliaments, the irresponsibility of assemblies; in the economic field by the increasingly numerous and important functions discharged by trade unions and trade associations with their disputes and ententes, affecting both capital and labor; in the ethical field by the need felt for order, discipline, obedience to the moral dictates of patriotism.

Fascism desires the State to be strong and organic, based on broad foundations of popular support. The Fascist State lays claim to rule in the economic field no less than in others; it makes its action felt throughout the length and breadth of the country by means of its corporative, social, and educational institutions, and all the political, economic, and spiritual forces of the nation, organized in their respective associations, circulate within the State. A State based on millions of individuals who recognize its authority, feel its action, and are ready to serve its ends is not the tyrannical state of a mediaeval lordling. It has nothing in common with the despotic States existing prior to or subsequent to 1789. Far from crushing the individual, the Fascist State multiplies his energies, just as in a regiment a soldier is not diminished but multiplied by the number of his fellow soldiers.

The Fascist State organizes the nation, but it leaves the individual adequate elbow room. It has curtailed useless or harmful liberties while preserving those which are essential. In such matters the individual cannot be the judge, but the State only.

The Fascist State is not indifferent to religious phenomena in general nor does it maintain an attitude of indifference to Roman Catholicism, the special, positive religion of Italians. The State has not got a theology but it has a moral code. The Fascist State sees in religion one of the deepest of spiritual manifestations and for this reason it not only respects religion but defends and protects it. The Fascist State does not attempt, as did Robespierre at the height of the revolutionary delirium of the Convention, to set up a "god" of its own; nor does it vainly seek, as does Bolshevism, to efface God from the soul of man. Fascism respects the God of ascetics, saints, and heroes, and it also respects God as conceived by the ingenuous and primitive heart of the people, the God to whom their prayers are raised.

The Fascist State expresses the will to exercise power and to command. Here the Roman tradition is embodied in a conception of strength. Imperial power, as understood by the Fascist doctrine, is not only territorial, or military, or commercial; it is also spiritual and ethical. An imperial nation, that is to say a nation a which directly or indirectly is a leader of others, can exist without the need of conquering a single square mile of territory. Fascism sees in the imperialistic spirit - i.e. in the tendency of nations to expand - a manifestation of their vitality. In the opposite tendency, which would limit their interests to

the home country, it sees a symptom of decadence. Peoples who rise or rearise are imperialistic; renunciation is characteristic of dying peoples. The Fascist doctrine is that best suited to the tendencies and feelings of a people which, like the Italian, after lying fallow during centuries of foreign servitude, are now reasserting itself in the world.

But imperialism implies discipline, the coordination of efforts, a deep sense of duty and a spirit of self-sacrifice. This explains many aspects of the practical activity of the regime, and the direction taken by many of the forces of the State, as also the severity which has to be exercised towards those who would oppose this spontaneous and inevitable movement of XXth century Italy by agitating outgrown ideologies of the XIXth century, ideologies rejected wherever great experiments in political and social transformations are being dared.

Never before have the peoples thirsted for authority, direction, order, as they do now. If each age has its doctrine, then innumerable symptoms indicate that the doctrine of our age is the Fascist. That it is vital is shown by the fact that it has aroused a faith; that this faith has conquered souls is shown by the fact that Fascism can point to its fallen heroes and its martyrs.

Fascism has now acquired throughout the world that universally which belongs to all doctrines which by achieving self-expression represent a moment in the history of human thought.

APPENDIX

1. PHILOSOPHIC CONCEPTION

(1) If Fascism does not wish to die or, worse still, commit suicide, it must now provide itself with a doctrine. Yet this shall not and must not be a robe of Nessus clinging to us for all eternity, for tomorrow is some thing mysterious and unforeseen. This doctrine shall be a norm to guide political and individual action in our daily life.

I who have I dictated this doctrine, am the first to realize that the modest tables of our laws and program the theoretical and practical guidance of Fascism should be revised, corrected, enlarged, developed, because already in parts they have suffered injury at the hand of time. I believe the essence and fundamentals of the doctrine are still to be found in the postulates which throughout two years have acted as a call to arms for the recruits of Italian Fascism. However, in taking those first fundamental assumptions for a starting point, we must proceed to carry our program into a vaster field.

Italian Fascists, one and all, should cooperate in this task, one of vital importance to Fascism, and more especially those who belong to regions where with and without agreement peaceful coexistence has been achieved between two antagonistic movements.

The word I am about to use is a great one, but indeed I do wish that during the two months which are still to elapse before our National Assembly meets, the philosophy of Fascism could be created. Milan is already contributing with the first Fascist school of propaganda.

It is not merely a question of gathering elements for a program, to be used as a solid foundation for the constitution of a party which must inevitably arise from the Fascist movement; it is also a question of denying the silly tale that Fascism is all made up of violent men. In point of fact among Fascists there are many men who belong to the restless but meditative class.

The new course taken by Fascist activity will in no way diminish the fighting spirit typical of Fascism. To furnish the mind with doctrines and creeds does not mean to disarm, rather it signifies to strengthúen our power of action, and make us ever more conscious of our work. Soldiers who fight fully conscious of the cause make the best of warriors. Fascism takes for its own the twofold device of Mazzini: Thought and Action u. *(Letter to Michele Bianchi,* written on August 27, 1921, for the opening of the School of Fascist Culture and Propaganda in Milan, in *Messaggi e Proclami,* Milano, Libreria d'Italia, 1929, P. 39).

Fascists must be placed in contact with one another; their activity

must be an activity of doctrine, an activity of the spirit and of thought.

Had our adversaries been present at our meeting, they would have been convinced that Fascism is not only action, but thought as well (Speech before the National Council of the Fascist Party, August 8, 1924, in *La Nuova Politica dell'Italia*, Milano, Alpes, 1928, p. 267).

(2) Today I hold that Fascism as an idea, a doctrine, a realization, is universal; it is Italian in its particular institutions, but it is universal in the spirit, nor could it be otherwise. The spirit is universal by reason of its nature. Therefore anyone may foresee a Fascist Europe. Drawing inspiration for her institutions from the doctrine and practice of Fascism; Europe , in other words, giving a Fascist turn to the solution of problems which beset the modern State, the Twentieth Century State which is very different from the States existing before 1789, and the States formed immediately after. Today Fascism fills universal requirements; Fascism solves the threefold problem of relations between State and individual, between State and associations, between associations and organized associations. (Message for the year 1 October 27, 1930, in *Discorsi del 1930*, Milano, Alpes, 1931, p. 211).

2. SPIRITUALIZED CONCEPTION

(3) This political process is flanked by a philosophic process. If it be true that matter was on the altars for one century, today it is the spirit which takes its place. All manifestations peculiar to the democratic spirit are consequently repudiated: easygoingness, improvisation, the lack of a personal sense of responsibility, the exaltation of numbers and of that mysterious divinity called n The People a. All creations of the spirit starting with that religious are coming to the fore, and nobody dare keep up the attitude of anticlericalism which, for several decades, was a favorite with Democracy in the Western world. By saying that God is returning, we mean that spiritual values are returning. *(Da the parte va it mondo, in Tempi della Rivoluzione Fascista*, Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 34).

There is a field reserved more to meditation upon the supreme ends of life than to a research of these ends. Consequently science starts from experience, but breaks out fatally into *philosophy* and, in my opinion, *philosophy* alone can enlighten science and lead to the universal idea. (To the Congress of Science at Bologna , October 31, 19,26, in *Discorsi del 1926.* Milano, Alpes, 1927, p. 268).

In order to understand the Fascist movement one must first appreciate the underlying spiritual phenomenon in all its vastness and depth. The manifestations of the movement have been of a powerful

and decisive nature, but one should go further. In point of fact Italian Fascism has not only been a political revolt against weak and incapable governments who had allowed State authority to decay and were threatening to arrest the progress of the country, but also a spiritual revolt against old ideas which had corrupted the sacred principles of religion, of faith, of country. Fascism, therefore, has been a revolt of the people. (Message to the British people; January 5, 1924, in *Mesúsaggi e Proclami,* Milano, Libreria d' Italia, 1929, p. 107).

3. POSITIVE CONCEPTION OF LIFE AS A STRUGGLE

(4) Struggle is at the origin of all things, for life is full of contrasts: there is love and hatred, white and black, day and night, good and evil; and until these contrasts achieve balance, struggle fatefully remains at the root of human nature. However, it is good for it to be so. Today we can indulge in wars, economic battles, conflicts of ideas, but if a day came to pass when struggle ceased to exist, that day would be tinged with melancholy; it would be a day of ruin, the day of ending. But that day will not come, because history ever discloses new horizons. By attempting to restore calm, peace, tranquility, or. A would be fighting the tendencies of the present period of dynamism. Ore must be prepared for other struggles and for other surprises. Peace will only come when people surrender to a Christian dream of universal brotherhood, when they can hold out hands across the ocean and over the mountains. Personally I do not believe very much in these idealisms, but I do not exclude them for I exclude nothing. (At the Politeama Rossetti, Trieste , September *20, 1920 ;* in *Discorsi Politici,* Milano, Stab. Tipografico del « Popolo d' Italia » , *1921,* p. 107).

(5) For me the honor of nations consists in the contribution they have severally made to human civilization. (E.Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini,* London, Allen and Unwin, *1932, p. 199)ú*

4. ETHICAL CONCEPTION

I called the organization Fasci Italiani Di combat tin onto. This hard metallic name compromised the whole program of Fascism as I dreamed it. Comrades, this is still our program: fight.

Life for the Fascist is a continuous, ceaseless fight, which we accept with ease, with great courage, with the necessary intrepidity. (C n the VIIth anniversary of the Foundation of the *Fasci,* March *2E, 1926,* in *Discorsi del 1926,* Milano, Alpes, *1927,* P. *9*8).

You touch the core of Fascist philosophy. When recently a

Finnish philosopher asked me to expound to him the significance of Fascism in one sentence, I wrote in German: ((We are against the "easy, lift! *a*. (E. Ludwig: *Talks with Mussolini,* London, Allen and Unwin, *1932, p. 190).*

5. RELIGIOUS CONCEPTION

(7) If Fascism were not a creed how could it endow its followers with courage and stoicism only a creed which has soared to the heights of religion can inspire such words as passed the lips, now lifeless alas, of Federico Florio. *(Legami di Sangue,* in *Diuturna, Miú*lano, Alpes, *1930, p. 256).*

6. HISTORICAL AND REALISTIC CONCEPTION

(8) Tradition certainly is one of the greatest spiritual forces of a people, inasmuch as *it* is a successive and constant creation of their *soul. (Breve Preludio,* in *Tempi della Rivoluzione Fascista,* Milano, Alpes, *1930, P- 13)*

(9) Our temperament leads us to appraise the concrete aspect of problems, rather than their ideological or mystical sublimation. Therefore we easily regain our balance. *(Aspetti del Dramma,* in *Diuturna,* Milano, Alpes, *1930,* p. 86).

Our battle is an ungrateful one, yet it is a beautiful battle since it compels us to count only upon our own forces. Revealed truths we have torn to shreds, dogmas we have spat upon, we have rejected all theories of paradise, we have baffled charlatans white, red, black charlatans who placed miraculous drugs on the market to give *a* happiness to mankind. We do not believe in program, in plans, in saints or apostles, above all we believe not in happiness, in salvation, in the Promised Land. *(Diuturna,* Milano, Alpes, *1930, p. 223).*

We do not believe in a single solution, be it economical, political or moral, a linear solution of the problems of life, because of illustrious choristers from all the sacristies life is not linear and can never be reduced to a segment traced by primordial needs. *(Navigare necesse,* in *Diuturna,* Milano, Alpes, *1930, p. 233).*

(10) We are not and do not wish to be motionless mummies, with faces perpetually turned towards the same horizon, nor do we wish to shut ourselves up within the narrow hedges of subversive bigotry, where formulas, like prayers of a professed religion, are muttered mechanically. We are men, living men, who wish to give our

contribution, however 'modest, to the creation of history. *(Audacia,* in Diuú *turna,* Milano, Alpes, *1930, p. ')ú*

We uphold moral and traditional values which Socialism neglects or despises; but, above all, Fascism has a horror of anything implying an arbitrary mortgage on the mysterious future. *(Dopo due anni,* in *Diuturna,* Milano, Alpes, *1930, p. 242).*

In spite of the theories of conservation and renovation, of tradition and progress expounded by the right and the left, we do not cling desperately to the past as to a last board of salvation: yet we do not dash headlong into the seductive mists of the future. *(Breve preludio,* in *Diuturna,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 14). `negation, eternal immobility, mean damnation. I am all for motion. I am, one who marches on (E. Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini,* Lot Jon, Allen and Unwin, 1932, p. 203).

7. THE INDIVIDUAL AND LIBERTY

(11) We were the first to state, in the face of demo liberal individualism, that the individual exists only in so far as he is within the State and subjected to the requirements of the state and that, as civilization assumes aspects which grow more and more complicated, individual freedom becomes more and more restricted. (To the General staff Conference of Fascism, in *Discorsi del 1929,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 280).

The sense of the state grows within the consciousness of Italians, for they feel that the state alone is the irreplaceable safeguard of their unit and independence; that the state alone represents continuity into the future of their stock and their history. (Message on the VIIth all anniversary, October 25, 1929, *Discorsi del 1929,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 300).

If, in the course of the past eight years, we have made such astounding progress, you may well think suppose and foresee that in the course of the next fifty or eighty years the onward trend of Italy , of this Italy we feel to be so powerful, so full of vital fluid, will really be grandiose. It will be so especially if concord lasts among citizens, if the State continues to be sole arbitrator in political and social conflicts, if all remains within the state and nothing outside the State, because it is impossible to conceive any individual existing outside the State unless he be a savage whose home is in the solitude of she sandy desert. (Speech before the Senate, May 12, 1928, in *Discorsi del 1928,* Milano, Alpes, 1929, p. 109).

Fascism has restored to the State its sovereign functions by claiming its absolute ethical meaning, against the egotism of classes

and categories; to the Government of the state, which was reduced to a mere instrument of electoral assemblies, it has restored dignity, as representing the personality of the state and its power of Empire. It has rescued State administration from the weight of factions and party interests (To the council of state, December 22, 1928, in Discorsi Del 1928, Milano, Alpes, 1929 p.328).

(12) Let no one think of denying the moral character of Fascism. For I should be ashamed to speak from this tribune if I did not feel that I represent the moral and spiritual powers of the state. What would the state be if it did not possess a spirit of its own, and a morality of its own, which lend power to the laws in virtue of which the state is obeyed by its citizens?

The Fascist state claims its ethical character: it is Catholic but above all it is Fascist, in fact it is exclusively and essentially Fascist. Catholicism completes Fascism, and this we openly declare, but let no one think they can turn the tables on us, under cover of metaphysics or philosophy. (To the Chamber of Deputies, May 13, 1929, in *Discorsi del 1929,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 182).

A State which is fully aware of its mission and represents a people which are marching on; a state which necessarily transforms the people even in their physical aspect. In order to be something more than a mere administrator, the State must utter great words, expound great ideas and place great problems before this people *(Diú scorsi del 1929,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 183).

(13) The concept of freedom is not absolute because nothing is ever absolute in life. Freedom is not a right, it is a duty. It is not a gift, it is a conquest; it is not equality, it is a privilege. The concept of freedom changes with the passing of time. There is a freedom in times of peace which is not the freedom of times of war. There is a freedom in times of prosperity which is not a freedom to be allowed in times of poverty. (Fifth anniversary of the foundation of the *Fasci di Contbattimento,* March 24, 1924, in *La nuova politica dell'Italia, vol.* III, Milano, Alpes, 1925, p. 30).

In our state the individual is not deprived of freedom. In fact, he has greater liberty than an isolated man, because the state protects him and he is part of the State. Isolated man is without defence. (E. Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini,* London, Allen and Unwin, 1932, P. 129).

(14) Today we may tell the world of the creation of the powerful united State of Italy, ranging from the Alps to Sicily; this State is expressed by a well-organized, centralized, Unitarian democracy,

where people circulate at case. Indeed, gentlemen, you admit the people into the citadel of the State and the people will defend it, if you close them out, the people will assault it. (speech before the Chamber of Deputies, May 26, 1927 , in *Discorsi del 1927,* Milano, Alpes, 1928, p. 159).

In the Fascist regime the unity of classes, the political, social and coral unity of the Italian people is realized within the state, and only within the Fascist state. (speech before the Chamber of Deputies, December 9, 1928 , in *Discorsi del* 1928, Milano, Alpes, 1929, p. 333).

8. CONCEPTION OF A CORPORATIVE STATE

(15) We have created the united state of Italy remember that since the Empire Italy had not been a united state. Here I wish to reaffirm solemnly our doctrine of the State. Here I wish to reaffirm with no weaker energy, the formula I expounded at the scala in Milan everything in the state, nothing against the State, nothing outside the state. (speech before the Chamber of Deputies, May 26, 1927 , *Discorsi del 1927,* Milano, Alpes, 1928, p. t57).

(16) We are, in other words, a state which controls all forces acting in nature. We control political forces, we control moral forces we control economic forces, therefore we are a full-blown Corporative state. We stand for a new principle in the world, we stand for sheer, categorical, definitive antithesis to the world of democracy, plutocracy, free-masonry, to the world which still abides by the fundamental principles laid down in 1789. (Speech before the new Naútional Directory of the Party, April 7, 1926, in *Discorsi del 1926,* Milano, Alpes, 1927, p. 120).

The Ministry of Corporations is not a bureaucratic organ, nor does it wish to exercise the functions of syndical organizations which are necessarily independent, since they aim at organizing, selecting and improving the members of syndicates. The Ministry of Corporations is an institution in virtue of which, in the centre and outside, integral corporation becomes an accomplished fact, where balance is achieved between interests and forces of the economic world. Such a glance is only possible within the sphere of the state, because the state alone transcends the contrasting interests of groups and individuals, in view of co-coordinating them to achieve higher aims. The achievement of these aims is speeded up by the fact that all economic organizations, acknowledged, safeguarded and supported by the Corpoúrative State, exist within the orbit of Fascism; in other terms they accept the conception of Fascism in theory and in practice. (speech at the opening

of the Ministry of Corporations, July 31, 1926, in *Discorsi del 1926*, Milano, Alpes, 1927, p. 250).

We have constituted a Corporative and Fascist state, the state of national society, a State which concentrates, controls, harmonizes and tempers the interests of all social classes, which are thereby protected in equal measure. Whereas, during the years of demo-liberal regime, labour looked with diffidence upon the state, was, in fact, outside the State and against the state, and considered the state an enemy of every day and every hour, there is not one working Italian today who does not seek a place in his Corporation or federation, who does not wish to be a living atom of that great, immense, living organization which is the national Corporate State of Fascism. (On the Fourth Anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28, 1926, in *Discorsi del 1926,* Milano, Alpes, 1927, p. 340).

9. DEMOCRACY

(17) The war was revolutionary, in the sense that with streams of blood it did away with the century of Democracy, the century of number, the century of majorities and of quantities. (Da *the pane va it Mondo,* in *Tempi della Rivoluzione Fascista,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 37)

(18) Cf. note 13.

(19) Race: it is a feeling and not a reality; 95 %, a feeling. (E. Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini,* London, Allen and Unwin, 1932, p. 75).

10. CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

(20) A nation exists inasmuch as it is a people. A people rise inasmuch as they are numerous, hard working and well regulated. Power is the outcome of this threefold principle. (To the General Assembly of the Party, March lo, 1929, in *Discorsi del 1929,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 24).

Fascism does not deny the State; Fascism maintains that a civic society, national or imperial, cannot be conceived unless in the form of a State *(Stab, anti-Slato, Fascismo,* in *Tempi della Rivoluzione Faúscista,* Milano, Alpes, 1930, p. 94).

For us the Nation is mainly spirit and not only territory.
There are States which owned immense territories and yet left no trace in the history of mankind. Neither is it a question of number, because there have been, in history, small, microscopic States, which left

immortal, imperishable documents in art and philosophy.

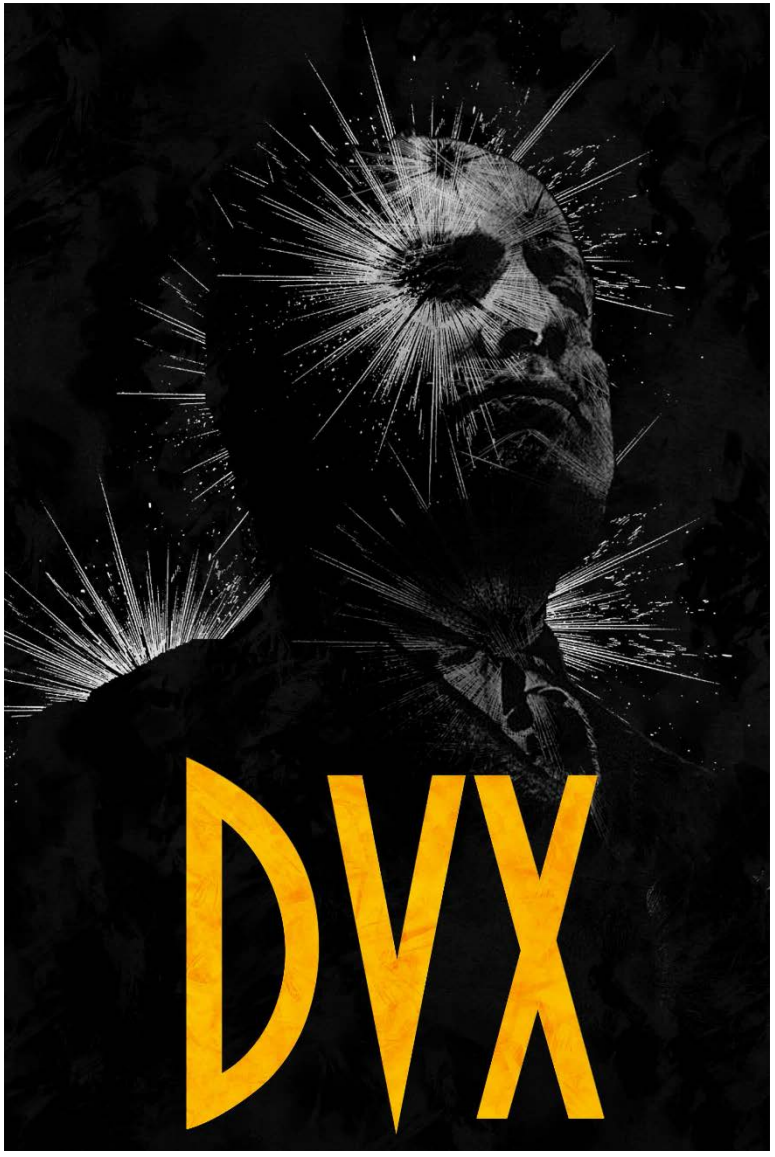
The greatness of a nation is the compound of all these virtues and conditions. A nation is great when the power of the spirit is translated into reality. (Speech at Naples, October 24, 1922, in *Discorsi della Rivoluzione,* Milano, Alpes, 1928, p. 103). We wish to unity the nation within the sovereign State, which is above everyone arid can afford to be against everyone, since it represents the moral continuity of the nation in history. Without the State there is no nation. There are, merely. human aggregations. subject to all the disintegration's which history may inflict upon them. (Speech before the National Council of the Fascist Party, August 8, 1924, in La *Nuova Politica dell'Italia, vol.* III; Milano, Alpes, 1928, p. 269).

DYNAMIC REALITY

(21) I believe that if a people wish to live they should develop a will to power, otherwise they vegetate, live miserably and become prey to a stronger people, in whom this will to power is developed to a higher degree. (Speech to the Senate, May 28, 1926).

(22) It is Fascism which has refashioned the character of the Italians, removing impurity from our souls, tempering us to all sacrifices, restoring the true aspect of strength and beauty to our Italian face. (Speech delivered at Pisa , May 25, 1926 , *in Discorsi del 1926,* Milano, Alpes, 1927, p. 193).

It is not out of place to illustrate the intrinsic character and profound significance of the Fascist Levy. It is not merely a ceremony, but a very important stage in the system of education and integral preparation of Italian men which the Fascist revolution considers one of the fundamental duties of the State: fundamental indeed, for if the State does not fulfill this duty or in any way accepts to place it under discussion, the State merely and simply forfeits its right to exist. (Speech before the Chamber of Deputies, May 28, 1928, in *Discorsi del 1928,* Milano, Alpes, 1929, p. 68).



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Benito Mussolini

INTRODUCTION

The man who forged the very name "*Fascism*," **Benito Amilcare Andrea *Mussolini***, is oftentimes dismissed and ignored in the circles of those who foremost identify with Adolf Hitler and German National Socialism, even among those that recognize how *both* served the same fundamental Worldview. The Jungian quote *"Hitler is a spiritual vessel, a demi-divinity; even better, a myth. … Mussolini is a man"* is, of course, an accurate one, but it is used too much to downplay Mussolini rather than to elevate Hitler – are mere men not capable of great things? Why is it that we still give due recognition to people like Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, Oswald Mosley, José Antonio Primo de Rivera and etc., yet Mussolini gets dismissed on no other grounds than *"he wasn't Hitler"?* **Mussolini** should be rightfully recognized in the pantheon of our Champions for what he had contributed to our Struggle, and for his true value to Italy and her people.

To this end we must touch upon several distinct subject matters, first of which will provide the necessary context for Mussolini's actions and vision – the realities of Italian history before and during the rise of Fascism. Other subjects we'll cover will deal with the character of the Italian people and thus with the character of Mussolini himself; Machiavelli's influence on Mussolini; and finally we'll go over Mussolini's goals regarding Italian racial policies and Italian Fascism's solid roots in the Fascist/NS Worldview.

As a quick aside before we begin proper, I will note that in writing this article I will foremost be relying on the analysis of Italian Fascism and its rise to power provided by **Nikolay Vasilyevich Ustryalov**, with some additional points taken from **Julius Evola** and the biography of **Italo Balbo** *"A Fascist Life"* by Claudio G. Segre.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

ITALY DIVIDED

For **centuries** after the final fall of the Roman Empire and prior to the March on Rome there was no unified Italy, and this period is best characterized by the **Klemens von Metternich** quote "*Italy is only a geographical expression.*" There was no such thing as Italy but rather a peculiar geographical expanse with a **variety of no less peculiar and unique states and provinces**, all with their own respective capitols and forms of rule, quite often existing under the direct influence of some foreign power *(ex: France, Germany, Austria in particular)*. This naturally led to the development of cultural regional divergences, and even to the formation of dialects that were different enough that a Northerner could barely understand a Southerner and vice versa.

And yet there was a distinct urge for unification that found its first, superficial triumph in the **Risorgimento**, when, finally, a single Italian State was forged. It is a superficial triumph, because it only accounted for creating a singular State, but not a singular people, for the centuries old divide between the people of Italy was yet to be overcome in the same fashion that the Italian lands were, as was remarked by **Massimo d'Azeglio**: *"We have made Italy, now we must make Italians."*

As a result of this merely outward unification, internally Italy remained largely divided. Imagine the attempted merger of two states, with their own respective ruling elites that fight to sustain some equivalent of their former power, as well as other social classes, all vying for their particular local interests dictated by the history of their respective state – an unstable situation and a difficult task to overcome.

Now imagine that it's not two states, but ten – this was the real struggle that Italy was facing in order to truly become unified.

No one social group could ever realistically hope to act as the basis for true unity, instead serving to only further contribute to the internal divide. The fact that there were no distinct social classes that existed overall everywhere in Italy further complicated matters, instead it was a hodgepodge of relatively similar groupings with often conflicting interests. For example, the Italian "peasantry" was a combination of petty property owners, farmers, the ***mezzadri***, and short-term laborers – the *braccianti*. The proportions of these groups varied from province to province. Of course, all of these colorful groupings were nevertheless fertile ground for socialist and communist influences, hence their prominent rise in Italy at the turn

of the century – the prime enemy of true Italian unification.

All of this is an example of **but one** vaguely defined stripe of people in Italy out of many others, moreover this way of categorizing the many divides across Italy is likewise but one of many. Regional history *(and thus complications towards Italian unity)* can be also illustrated by the Italian Mafia, which could only have formed in the lawless South. The Italian intellectuals had no unity among themselves either as they all promoted some notions that were representative of their own region's legacy, hence there were the usual suspects such as republicans, monarchists, democrats, conservatives and liberals, but also the specifically Italian "***Garibaldians***" and "***Mazzinians***."

Furthermore, there was a growing divide between this disjointed Italian society and its newly forged, unified, but clumsy and indecisive, State. Industrial, agrarian, and the newly formed bourgeois interests were all at war with one another *(and as we highlighted above, within themselves as well)*, as well as with the State itself, depending on whom among them it decided to court. The Church likewise had a strained relationship *(to say the least)* with the State, due to its historic conflicts with all Italian political states. Increasingly, local forms of self-organization were springing up everywhere: syndicates, leagues, people's banks, rural collection funds, various associations, cooperatives, catholic and socialist councils.

One major factor that is often overlooked, is that at the time Italy experienced overpopulation, which in part fueled **Italian irredentist motivations**, in search of more living space, placing them at a crossroads with the same foreign powers that used to influence various states that existed in Italy prior to unification.

Overpopulation coupled with economic turmoils of an indecisive unified Italy led to mass migration abroad – between 1881 and 1901 the number of Italians migrants jumped from just over a million to well over 3 million people, favored destinations being America and other European countries, with fewer people moving to Africa, Asia and Oceania. By 1908 there were already over 5 million Italians abroad, terms like *"Italian colonies without the Italian flag"* and *"Imperialism of the Poor"* become accurate descriptors of this situation.

The problem of overpopulation also inevitably fueled the goal of industrializing Italy in order to combat the poverty of the wide masses. Hence, unified Italian nationalism developed closely alongside goals of economic necessity, pitting it directly against marxist socialism in the fight for the Italian proletariat. Italian

nationalism and imperialism/irredentism had a distinctly proletarian flavor to them: it was in the Italian worker's own interest to help expand Italian borders. The prevailing attitude was that the Italian immigrants were slaving away for foreign powers when they should be working for themselves and for their homeland – Italy.

What is socialism for the proletariat, is nationalism for the Italian: a weapon of liberation against insufferable oppression. What is the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, are the French, Germans, English, Americans, be they Argentinians or Yankees: the rich – these are our enemies.

Enrico Corradini

The sentiment above, along with the historic background provided so far, is a good indicator of how easily any Italian person of the time could have started out seemingly socialist, while nurturing nationalist attitudes, as was the case with **Mussolini**. Moreover, one can easily see certain distinct parallels with German history and its precursors for the rise of National Socialism, more of which will become apparent further along in this article.

MUTILATED VICTORY

Arguably, the formal history of unified Italian nationalism, starts on December 3rd of 1910 in Florence, with the first Nationalist congress. However, this was the tired Old nationalism of the 19th century, one that relied exclusively on upper class and big banks' support, hence in 1913 they gained only 6 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Italian Nationalism had surged with Italy's involvement in the First World War *(over 200,000 volunteers)*, which the Nationalists and Irredentists saw as an opportunity to complete the process of Italian liberation of **1848**, **1859**, **1860**, **1866**, the very history of which negated the possibility of Italy joining the War on the side of the Central Powers, even though such a possibility was toyed with by the Italian State, but would have found total opposition within the masses. In 1914 **Mussolini** spoke as the voice of those masses when he declared: *"If you begin a war against France you will find barricades in Italy!"*

It was in this moment, as it is well known, that **Mussolini** broke with the socialists, who had refused to support the war effort. In fact, their behavior stood in distinct contrast with the socialist movements in other countries: European socialists had broken with

their dogma in favor of patriotism, while in Russia the dogma was carried out forth with revolutionary fervor. In short, Italian socialists acted as neither patriots nor revolutionaries, instead they opted for total neutrality, which would hamper them for some time after the war, in the wake of Italy's victory. **Mussolini** would, in the end, simply state: *"those who remain neutral do not command the course of events, but are subservient to them; blood alone moves the wheel of history."* Moreover, **Mussolini** takes his daring further still, as he forms the interventionist union *"Fasci di azione revoluzionaria"* with the slogan *"War today, tomorrow – revolution!,"* combining patriotism with revolution, nationalism with socialism. In the final days before Italy enters the war, he would go on to threaten the uncertain King with the ultimatum: *"The honor and future of the Fatherland are in danger; it stands at a great crossroads in its history. Last word belongs to the people! Either war, or a republic!"* (Il Popolo d'Italia, May 15th, 1915).

The initial enthusiastic surge of nationalism inevitably turns sour and becomes enraged at the conclusion of the war – the words *"sconfitta vittoria!" (defeated/ruined victory),* or **Gabriele D'Annunzio's** *"mutilated victory,"* and a call for *"mending"* said victory begin to spread all over Italy. The promises of *"Italia irredenta"* of the **Treaty of London** met strong opposition from US president **Woodrow Wilson** in his **14 points**, and would ultimately be nullified by the Treaty of Versailles.

While the results of the war were not unfavorable or disadvantageous to Italy *(both in the sense of shifted geopolitics and in what territories it did receive as per the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Treaty of Rapallo)*, they were not entirely what she was promised. **Fiume** became a potent symbol of *"mutilated victory,"* as per the Treaty of Rapallo it was declared an independent city-state: a pointless and artificial compromise for all the parties involved that satisfied absolutely no one. **The events that followed** in many ways can be looked at as a precursor/microcosm to the larger national reaction that would give rise to Italian Fascism.

Ustryalov notes: *"They say that if you ask in Italy "where had Fascism come from?" – the inevitable answer to follow would be "Fascism was born from the rage of warriors…."* – an echo of something very similar happening in Germany and expounded on in the interwar articles of Ernst Jünger. Further parallels can be found in what the frontline soldiers of both countries had to witness when they had returned home.

Italy was then, as it is now, a popular tourist destination – rich tourists living in expensive hotels, who regarded Italy as a

country of museums, singers and artists; living it up alongside them were *"new money"* military officers and upstart reservists who had never seen the front but exploited and speculated on Italy's military industrialization to fill their pockets. They would earn themselves the derogatory name *"pescicani"* – *"sharks."* The same wartime industrialization which was disastrous for Italy, a fairly new and poor country led by indecisive politicians. It had strained itself to the limit and only now, after victory, was switching into the transitory period towards peace time economics, something that other, older and more experienced countries, had already been slowly and seamlessly moving towards as the war was reaching its obvious conclusion. In fact, large industry continued to grow in spite of war's end, as the State gave in to the demands of the new bourgeoisie and banks, who had everything to gain from this move. Rich foreign tourists, rich capitalists, rich traitorous *"allies"* who stole Italy's victory, rich military cowards and upstarts everywhere, meanwhile the average Italian was poor and struggled to survive in his own *"victorious"* country as unemployment and inflation rose. *"Fascism was born from the rage of warriors"* – of the 4 million Italian combatants in WW1, no less than 3,5 million had come from the village, which had been hit hard by the industrialization politics of the big cities. All of this, of course, likewise began to revive the Italian socialists, who promoted the narrative of the war having been only conducted for the sake of capitalist interests.

RED ADVANCE

Social unrest mounts, agrarian riots sweep the country, reaching their most violent manifestations in the South, the internal divisions of the hodgepodge *"peasantry"* begin to manifest further as the rural proletarian *braccianti* side with the most revolutionary leftist elements. The agrarian question reaches such dire dimensions that in October of 1919 the King relinquishes ownership of most of his own lands in favor of the State, hoping to mitigate the situation.

In the cities the workers were utilizing their favorable foothold brought by wartime industrialization to secure and improve their material situation, Revolutionary Russia inspiring them to make more and more demands of the Italian State, led since 1919 by the **Nitti** government. It represented the new progressive Italian bourgeoisie, which sought to solve Italy's numerous problems through reforms and what Nitti himself called *"sacred ideas of a new labor democracy,"* as he sought to *"unite capital with labor."*

Mussolini characterized this period by saying *"Nobody had*

the courage to be that, which they are meant to be. Bourgeois took on a socialist facade, and the socialist was growing into a bourgeois. The whole atmosphere was painted in halftones [mezze tinte].”

And yet the labor revolution was continuing its advance, rejuvenated by the aftermath of the same war, the beginning of which had virtually cut off its oxygen. Metallurgical plants *(which benefited greatly from the War)* are forced to sign a collective agreement with the main Metallurgists Confederacy in February of 1919, the workers are granted an 8 hour work day along with other rights and benefits, realization of the agreement was overseen directly by the workers themselves. Yet soon enough 300,000 workers go on strike with new demands. Nitti insists that the factory and plant owners agree to these demands, thus only feeding the revolutionary hunger. Just some 4 months later, on February 18th, Milan is rocked by a workers demonstration of at least 10,000 people. The whole of May is marred by riots.

It is around this time that Fascism takes its first, tentative roots: on the 23rd of March the first congress of Fascists takes place, and at the start of September D’Annunzio takes Fiume, forcing the Italian State into an uneasy diplomatic situation. In fact Nitti’s government was failing on all fronts, losing support from everyone with its half-measures and compromises as it tried to be friends with all opposing sides and interests: bourgeois, socialist, catholic *(represented by the center-left **Popolari**)*. The November 1919 parliamentary elections end with large victory for the socialists (156 seats) and Popolari (100 seats), much to the dismay of Nitti, who had himself carried out the preceding electoral reform to increase proportionality of votes and make the entire process more democratic. In hindsight it would be said that this reform was an act of suicide on behalf of the old ruling liberal oligarchy. In 1920 Nitti’s government would finally fall.

In his place returns **Giovanni Giolitti**, a familiar face to Italian people, who, unlike Nitti, favored the agriculture to industry, and thus his policies were targeted against the bloated parasite of industrial interests. This would still pit him against both the socialists and capitalists, who were interested in maintaining the underlying status quo for the pursuit of their respective interests. The combined opposition of the bourgeoisie, workers, banks and cooperatives foiled him at every turn, and he would eventually follow in Nitti’s footsteps, suggesting factory owners and employers to give in to the workers’ demands, fearful of factories closing down.

The socialists, however, hit their own breaking point, and in

January of 1921 the party was formally split in two: socialists and communists. The split was growing slowly but steadily in the party for some years, foremost due to a lack of a truly iconic leader, one that they had lost in **Mussolini**, confirming Lenin's remark: *"What a waste that we lost Mussolini. He is a first-rate man who would have led our party to power in Italy."* Instead, the socialists were left with figures like **Bissolati**, who had switched to the right of the main party line; **Turati**, who was averse to any extremist notions; and **Seratti**, party majority leader, who, despite his sympathies towards Revolutionary Russia, constantly pursued centrist half-measures. None of them could carry the revolution forward, ensuring that Italian socialism remained a phenomenon of parliament games and intrigues, or as **Mussolini** would describe it *"pasta socialism."* Still, revolutionary attitudes grew naturally, wildly, in spite of Socialist party leaders, which would inevitably force the split between the tentative socialists and the radical communists.

Revolutionary spirit reached its zenith in the summer and autumn of 1920, a period of raging general strikes. July was marked by a **military revolt in Ancona**. At the end of May a congress of metallurgists takes place in Genoa, and on the 18th of June the demands are passed on to the federation of industrialists, but no agreement is reached. Both sides are represented by **Jews**. In response the workers begin organizing for a general strike, and on August 30th the *"Romeo"* factory organizes a lockout, the workers respond by taking over around 300 factories in and on the outskirts of Milan. Soon enough the first Red Guard are organized.

All the while the State remains impotent, incapable of influencing these rapidly developing events. Giolitti tells the bourgeois parties that a forceful eviction of the workers from the factories is impossible both technically and judicially. The revolutionary fire spreads to nearby cities and the metallurgists are joined by workers in other fields, including the post, as mailmen would deliver letters addressed to bourgeois factory owners directly to the workers occupying the factory. Interestingly enough the Popolari support the uprisings, even though at the start of the year they assisted the government in resolving similar strikes.

Herein the internal split began to manifest itself, as the communist radical **Gennari** pushes for the conflict to advance from its phase of economic demands to the full on political takeover, while the **Confederation of Labor** led by **D'Aragona** maintained a reformist course of action, welcoming the strike, all the while denying giving it a political character. In the end D'Aragona, with the support of other moderates Tuarti and Serrati would win this

standoff, effectively staggering the revolutionary advance. Italian socialists proved themselves capable of taking over factories, but not taking power, capable of a general strike, but not of direct political action.

Giolitti immediately takes advantage of the shift within the Socialist party and declares support for their economic demands. This paved the way to a compromise between the State and the socialists, one that both sides were equally eager for, and an agreement was reached on the 19th of September, with further concessions made towards the workers. Factories were cleared out and normalcy was restored, yet this state of affairs, a new compromise forwarded by Giolitti, satisfied neither the industrialists nor the workers. In the case of the latter this resulted in some moderate socialist leaders being voted out of their party positions by the workers in favor of radicals and extremists.

The government crisis only deepens further, revealing just how paralyzed the State truly was, unable to push forth any reforms, instead it constantly found itself dragging behind events, facing new situations instead of directing them. Unrest was growing everywhere, and everywhere tentative half-measures and inaction resulted in louder cries for radical solutions and extreme measures.

Constant concessions to manual labor created a curious inversion, where said labor paid better than qualified labor of specialists and engineers, who in their majority, as a result, did not support the socialists, and instead, along with universities, sided with the bourgeois parties, at a time when the bourgeoisie was near-universally hated. The Popolari, for having sided with the workers, lost all their support in the patriotic and bourgeois circles, having gained nothing. Villages were strained by riots, burglary, pogroms. It had become unsafe for soldiers to appear in their uniforms on the streets, as they would be besieged on all sides by calls of retribution against those who dragged Italy into the war that ended up costing it so much. In fact, a general assault on ideas of patriotism was in full swing, pushed by the most revolutionary elements. Ustryalov gives his evaluation of this move: *"It was as if the red revolution had set as its goal to "devalue Italy." On its part this was worse than a crime: it was a mistake."*

THE FASCIST DRAGON

While the Red Revolution effectively fizzled out, having lost its momentum and suffering an internal split, patriotic, irredentist and nationalist sentiments were reaching critical mass and desperately needed a directed output. On the 23rd of March 1919 WW1 Italian Arditi stormtroopers, who had once followed D'Annunzio to take Fiume, legionaries and other former frontline combatants had gathered in a small hall of a trade school on San Sepolkro square of Milan, brought together by patriotic rage, hatred for the allies, disdain for their own weak government and a thirst for a different kind of revolution. These were the first Fascists led by **Mussolini**, organized in a *"union of war combatants" – Fascio di combattimento*. Most were former socialists and syndicalists, and **Mussolini** himself still maintained some loyalties to his *"socialist"* past *(which we'll discuss in detail in the next major segment of this article, on Italian Character)*, and the local workers looked favorably on his new organization. As a result of this, during a worker's strike on the outskirts of Milan, when the local factory was seized it wasn't a red banner, but the national flag that was hoisted over it, and **Mussolini's** new newspaper, *Popolo d'Italia*, rejoices and supports the workers. However, the newspaper soon changes its presentation from a *"weekly socialist newspaper"* to *"newspaper of workers and combatants" – Giornale dei combattenti e dei produttori*.

This initial meeting, at the height of the Red Advance, was a seed planted in fertile ground of civil unrest, digging its roots deeply into the yet unmanifested, and overshadowed by the socialist revolts, patriotic energies. Italy wasn't yet ready for Fascism, and likewise the Fascists were not yet ready to take the stage, still trying to find themselves in the midst of commonplace political formulas and banal *"radicalism"* of the time. In those early days Fascism was still toying with some socialist party and democratic formulas, the only thing standing out as its own unique characteristic was the very vividly nationalist overtone and militant makeup of those, as **Mussolini** put it, *"who called the country to war and led her to victory."* Here the nationalist, irredentist and patriotic energies found their output and would manifest as the only force capable of rivaling socialism in the hearts of the masses. However, this wasn't the old and tired *"upper crust"* nationalism of the previous century, but a form of nationalism that toyed with the ideas of mass appeal and democracy, at least for now, until it would throw all democratic notions overboard, during Fascism's deadly struggle with red revolutionaries.

While the Red Advance was at its peak and fed on the mind

and soul of the masses, leaving no room for contenders, **Mussolini** carefully waited and placed more attention on propaganda regarding foreign affairs, the bread and butter of irredentist ambitions, patriotic rage and militant resentment. Fascism remains quiet during the height of the red takeover of factories, biding its time, waiting for its own moment of revolutionary activity. And that moment came with the September agreement, when the Red Advance faltered all on its own and a widespread antisocialist reaction began to rise, carrying Fascism with it, becoming a hub for that reaction. On the 21st of November red revolutionaries kill a popular lawyer **Giulio Giordani**, which had proven to be the final straw, and some characterize his death to be the starting point of the Fascist Era. Squads of Blackshirts begin to arise rapidly all over the country – the teeth of the Fascist Dragon, sown by years of civil unease and tentative half-measures, finally ready for harvest. Fascism skyrockets from a small group to a national phenomenon.

The red revolution would never have won out, even if it didn't falter and split, for one of its major goals was to take away from the Italians their homeland, so soon after an incredible time of national tension and national victory, *too soon* since the Risorgimento. National pride, perhaps bruised and battered, was still alive and well, in fact more so, specifically *because* it was bruised. Ustryalov: *"Mussolini had found the wide masses at a dead end and blew up that dead end with furious preaching of love for the Fatherland."* One Italian Fascist slogan dictates: *"The Fatherland is not denied – it is conquered!" – La Patria non si nega, si conquista!*

Fascism begins to find support in a variety of places, making for a colorful pallet of members, often contradictory in their ideas, but united by a not yet clearly defined feeling, one that **Mussolini** masterfully directs through his fiery and radical speeches and articles. Without him this movement *(or "antiparty," as the Fascists had referred to themselves at the time)* would have surely never found its footing and broken down into warring factions. He was the axe to their rods, bound together by that mysterious feeling, creating the symbol of the Fasces. As he had united different groups in Fascism, he would unite different Italians into one nation – *"We have made Italy, now we must make Italians."*

And Italians flocked to Fascism in droves, hungry for radical, revolutionary means, which the socialists and workers, to their disappointment, did not in the end provide. The appeal of extremes was now displaced instead to the qualities of the very sort of men that had founded the squads of Blackshirts and were now recruited from all walks of life – strength, honor, decisiveness and bravery. The

Red Advance had lost its monopoly on revolutionary appeal, which Fascism combined with militant patriotism – socialism and nationalism, together. **Mussolini** declares: *"I love Italians, people of one blood as me, of same habits, who speak my language, belong to the same history. Then, while hating parasites of all kinds in all countries, I love the workers… It is not at all necessary for one to accept the international chimera in order to improve life. One does not need to reject their Fatherland and nation, for it is first of all absurd, and then criminal, to reject one's own mother…"*

By 1921 the Blackshirts become a fact of everyday life in Italy. According to the data of the Fascist Congress from November of the same year, the Fascist organizations consisted of the following: 24 thousand industrial workers, 34 thousand agrarian workers, 18 thousand landowners, 20 thousand students, 22 thousand state and private servants, 18 thousand industrial and trade bourgeoisie, 12 thousand teachers and people of *"liberal professions,"* coming to a total of around 150 thousand. Thus, over a third of Fascists came from the villages and over another third were intellectuals.

Fascism finds widespread popularity with the youth, which while being already hot-blooded by nature, was charged by wartime experience, having become tense and ready for action. The indecisive and timid nature of the state angered them and made them question the legality and universal value of rights, growing more confident that might makes right. Fascism declares itself to be a movement of the youth, one that aims to rejuvenate the nation, bringing back its own youthful vigor. Here the Futurist elements within Fascism *(which often found itself at odds with the Roman traditionalist elements)* begin to dance more rapidly, and at one point **Marinetti** proposes to replace the Italian Senate with a *"Council of Youth."* The same youth that had taken Fiume had now joined Fascism, and the most popular Fascist hymn **is an ode to youth**.

Giovinezza, giovinezza,
Primavera di bellezza.
Nel Fascismo e la salvezza
Della nostra liberta

Youth, youth
Spring of beauty,
In Fascism is salvation
Of our freedom.

Fascism found support and *"fellow travelers"* among futurists and traditionalists, republicans *(in the sense of supporting the establishment of a republic)* and monarchists, intellectuals, bureaucrats, bourgeoisie, peasant landowners and small business owners, a considerable portion of Catholics *(not taking kindly to antichristian red rhetoric)*, anyone and everyone who were motivated either by enraged patriotism or class interest. This led to Fascism having a different flavor in different regions, showcasing both the national divide *and* its overcoming. Fascism came about as a pan-national phenomenon, overcoming all divisions, including those of class, promising both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat what was viewed as duly owed, but issuing warnings against greedy ambitions of either. One such warning came directly from **Mussolini** as he said: *"Do not claim that Fascist politics will serve capitalists. There are different sorts of bourgeoisie. One that you yourselves are bound to respect due to technical and historic necessity. You too feel the necessity of this intelligent and productive bourgeoisie, one that creates and directs industry. In the current period of history, at least, we can't do without it. Then there is an ignorant bourgeoisie, a lazy and parasitic one. […] Rest assured: if the capitalist circles hope for us to grant them excessive privileges, they will be mistaken. They will never receive such from us. Yet, on the other hand, if certain working circles, who have turned bourgeois in the bad sense of the word, hope to siphon from our system unfair advantages, electoral or otherwise, – they will likewise be mistaken. They will never see any of that."* At another point he says: *"If the bourgeoisie hopes we'll be their lightning rod, they will be wrong."* Fascism declares itself to be *"a friend to the entrepreneur but not to the bourgeois."*

With this wide spread support and a thirst for action from its youthful supporters, with the Red Advance halted and crumbling from within, **Mussolini** switches the emphasis of his rhetoric from foreign affairs to internal politics and declares that he would establish order using the same means by which socialism wanted to create disorder – by means of violence. Blackshirts organize into units known as Squadristi, each Fascist is instilled with the idea of service, order and unity akin to those of Knightly Orders. The Fascist Charter dictates *"The Fascist party as such is a militia."* To join this Order meant to be reborn for the new world that was to be built in place of the old: *"The Fascist Warrior has his own morality. Laws of common morality regarding family, politics, social relations are foreign to him."*

From 1921 and onward Fascism takes up arms, militarizes

and centralizes its organization. In December of same year the movement transforms into a political party – *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, the National Fascist Party, complete with its first concrete political programs that sing of service to the Nation – the State is declared to be a judicial manifestation of the Nation, however if the existing state does not fulfill its role as the carrier of national values, then the party, in the name of the Nation, will not stand with it, but against it. The program also talks, among other things, of national syndicalism, 8 hour work day, participation of the workers in the control of the factories, foreign interests, improving the military, creating a Fascist Militia, it highlights the importance of Fascist youth, as well as a number of things regarding the party structure. One of the Fascist theorists states that *"Fascism is a synthesis of the healthy old and the necessary new."*

After the death of lawyer Giordani the country is swept by waves of Fascist terror which would target both individuals and masses. Punitive actions and actions of reprisal begin against all those who are deemed to be enemies of the Nation and those who dared to attack a Fascist, or as Italo Balbo had put it: *"Above all, we have to strike terror in our adversaries. A Fascist cannot be killed with impunity."* Youthful energies, nationalist tensions, patriotic rage begin to finally spill out and Fascist violence finds its targets: red peasant leagues and cooperatives are burning in the countryside – a strike against those who wished to renounce the Fatherland, their revolution has fizzled out; broken windows of ally embassies – vengeance for mutilated victory; a Popolari cooperative is burnt down for allying with the socialists; random enemies assaulted by flying squads of Blackshirts. A bit later insult would be added to injury as castor oil becomes a common way to *"finish off"* the foe. The usual accusations of thuggery follow, yet Fascists prove that the only way to beat back red violence was with black violence, echoing what Hitler would write in the pages of Mein Kampf. Again, Italo Balbo cuts to the heart of the matter: *"[Violence is] the quickest and most definitive way reaching the revolutionary goal. […] No bourgeois hypocrisy, no sentimentalism; action, direct and sharp, carried out to the end, at whatever cost."*

Fascist terror reaches its height in the summer and autumn of 1921. And just as in the years of the Red Advance, now faced with the Fascist Dragon, the government remained passive and quiet. At first the state saw in the Blackshirts a useful tool for negotiating worker and bourgeois interests, a boogeyman to keep them in line with, however in doing so they allowed a virtual state within a state to develop and run rampant against its enemies until **Mussolini** would boast loudly to the

whole nation: *"Fascism has already won because socialism has already been defeated everywhere."* In April of the same year Giolitti dissolves the Chamber of Deputies, hoping that the new elections would clear it of socialists, communists and the Popolari, all the elements that opposed his reform plans. During the elections he creates a *"Block of Parties for Order"* that had included the Fascists. However the 15th of May election had not realized his hopes, as he was unable to secure a majority, despite the socialists losing a few seats to the liberals. Instead the Popolari retained control of the parliamentary machine, however now, for the first time, Fascists secured their place at the table with 30 seats, one of which was taken by **Mussolini** himself. By the end of June, Giolitti's cabinet resigns, to be replaced on the 4th of July by a social-reformist **Bonomi**, whose turn as Prime Minister would only last until February of next year, proving itself to be just as impotent as all its predecessors.

The socialists, on their part, continued their course of sabotaging their own efforts, as their representatives in parliament stood in staunch opposition to the new government, for its bourgeois nature, thus eliminating any power it could have through parliament. Meanwhile Fascism continued its confident march to victory, its ranks increasing in numbers from year to year: in 1919 the Fascist Dragon still slept, few in numbers; in autumn of 1920 it had tens of thousands of followers stirring it awake; a year later it was 150 thousand strong, spreading its wings over Italy and breathing fire at its enemies; in the summer of 1922 it amassed 470 thousand members *(of which 277 thousand were peasants and agrarian workers and 72 thousand were industrial workers)*, and in the autumn of the same year, by the time it had taken power, it was nearly one million strong. By autumn of 1921 the Red Advance was effectively crushed, but the political crisis continued to grow.

MARCH ON ROME

With socialism and the Red Advance thoroughly crushed, **Mussolini** sets his sights on the liberal government. The change of course was made drastically clear, when in his speech from December 1st of 1921 he threatens, that if the government upsets the Fascists enough, they would unite with the communists against the state, only to swiftly destroy communism thereafter. A potent threat which came at a time when the State believed that Fascism's usefulness as a tool against the Red Advance was outlived, however it was now virtually powerless against it. Ustryalov colorfully

describes the situation thus: *"Giolitti, having at first favored Fascism's freemen, had become to a degree akin to the notorious mage, helpless against the powers he had summoned.*

The anti-red medicine proved to be so effective, that it now threatened the official "pink" government of Rome." In turn, Bonomi likewise was unable to hold on to the seat of Prime Minister, which had passed to **Luigi Facta**, who would be later nicknamed *Romulus Augustulus*, in honor of the last Roman Emperor, yet another in a long line of ineffective, weak politicians.

Par for the course of Italian parliamentarism which continued to play its petty games of party relations. Socialists were steadfast in their opposition, the Popolari kept wavering and waffling, all the while the small band of Fascists, emboldened by its support outside of parliament, acted with disproportionate bravado, all of which deteriorated the parliament's prestige. There is finally talk of *"subduing the Fascists,"* which further moves **Mussolini** towards the idea of a forceful takeover. His articles are full of anger and disdain for the state, democracy, and liberal government. Fascist action renews across the country as the Fascist armed forces, by now fully formed and organized, take over entire cities, cleansing them of whatever little red presence still around, and proclaim their own rule and laws. Ferrara, Bologna, Ravenna and Genoa become such bastions of Fascism. *Both* the socialists **and** communists now ask the government for help and protection, for a return to the rule of law. Balbo jeers: *"What revolutionary fiber these socialists have! To defend themselves, they have no other arguments than the Royal Carabinieri…"* The Fascist reply to any accusations of lawlessness was *"We greatly revere the law, however at the same time, in our ambitions towards just goals we will not stop short of breaking it, if it acts too slowly or unsuccessfully."*

Both the government and the socialists enter yet another phase of their respective crises. Facta's government begins to fall apart after a Fascist attack on the home of the leader of leftist Catholics, **Guido Miglioli**. The Popolari exit the government majority in protest.

Meanwhile the socialists suffered another split in September, between those who wanted to cooperate with the government and those who wished to maintain opposition, leading to the expulsion of the former from the party. The latter begin toying with the idea of a new general strike, which was planned for the 1st of August, with no coordination with the General Confederation of Labor. This was the last, desperate, dying scream of the Red Advance. **Mussolini** had masterfully utilized this to his advantage, to deliver the final blow

against all antiFascist forces in the country. On the very first day of the strike he issues a warning to the government in his newspaper: *"if the government does not stop the general strike within 48 hours, it will be done by Fascists."* The strike had failed and officially dispersed on the 3rd of August, not without Fascist participation, which gave credence to **Mussolini's** further criticisms against the impotent liberal state. It could not be improved, only destroyed. The new government crisis was over just in time for the start of the strike, with Facta retaining his position, however now its days were numbered.

Mussolini is now fully committed to a revolutionary takeover. Both technical, military and ideological preparations are underway. As the Blackshirts form up and take arms, **Mussolini** writes article after article, gives speech after speech, threats and warnings in every single one: *"The liberal government is but a mask with no face behind it!"; "There is a proletariat which deserves punishment so that it may improve, and a bourgeoisie, which hates us, tries to mix up our ranks, and pays for papers that spread lies about us – I will have not one drop of mercy towards this bourgeoisie.*" In his famous Udine speech from September 20th of 1922 he declares ***"Rome or Death!"*** He speaks of a *"Nation's struggle against an antinational government."* The goal of Fascism is made crystal clear, some of the words in the speech sound so familiar, as if spoken by **Corneliu Codreanu** himself: "*We wish to rule Italy. That is our credo, our ambition. Italy* ***never had a shortage of programs for salvation. What it did lack was real people and the necessary will!*** *We are a new people, capable of ruling a new Italy. Fascism will place a great responsibility on its own shoulders."*

There was only one obstacle in the way to taking power, one that came from within. Fascism, having united in its ranks both Monarchists and Republicans *(**Mussolini** himself having been the latter for all his life)*, was threatened to be divided over the issue of the King – was he to be deposed by the Fascist revolution or not? **Mussolini** will not risk division of his forces at this, most crucial hour, especially over a non-issue. The King, much like the Parliament, was passive, impotent, in short, not a threat to Fascist power – there is no reason why he couldn't be brought into the fold, or as Ustryalov puts it: *"The monarchization of Fascism was bought with the Fascization of the monarchy."* The King could retain his, by this point in time, purely symbolic and cultural position, however only in exchange for his support of Fascism. Depending on the King's decision, Fascists would march under one of the two slogans: it is either the union of Fascism and the King against the

liberal state – *long live the Fascist Monarchy!*; or Fascism would march against both the King and liberal state – *glory to the Fascist Republic!* That is how **Mussolini** had posed the question of the Monarchy in Udine. Moreover, he declares: *"The republican tradition in Fascism is explained by the fact that the* ***Italian Monarchy is not monarchist enough.*** *[…] the monarchy, to the contrary, has no reason to turn against that, which has been called the "Fascist revolution." It is in its own interests. If it were to do so and find itself in the ranks of our enemies we would be unable to grant it mercy or to save it, as it would be a question of life and death for us…* ***Why are we republicans? It can be said that this is so, because we see a monarch who is not enough of a monarch!****"* These formulas are very much reminiscent of the French **ultra-royalists**, and were more than welcomed by the Monarchists and Traditionalists in the Fascist ranks, and were acceptable to the Republicans. The resolution of the King question was to be left up to the King himself.

Fascism was likewise letting go of its more radically anti-Christian beginnings. **Mussolini**, in this, was a student of Nietzsche, and back in 1919, on the 28th of September he spoke in the hall of a Milan conservatory: *"I very much favor pagans, who thirst for struggle, life, progress, alien to blind faith in otherworldly truths and detest miraculous panaceas."* This, just as the republicanism, were leftovers of the socialist past, which still held some truth to **Mussolini**, but would be refined in the long path of Fascism's ascend to power, this is clear from just how many Catholics had flocked to its side over the years. The metamorphosis was necessary as yet another way of breaching a historic national divide, and the Vatican was likewise offered its place within the Fascist state after the takeover. Fascist Militia would at one point update their oath, now having its members swear to both God and Fatherland, which wouldn't stop them, however, from attacking the Popolari. On the 27th of June, 1922, **Mussolini** again sends a signal to Catholics, both in his ranks and in the wide masses of Italians, that they had nothing to fear: *"Fascism is not going to evict God from the heavens or religion from the earth, as some materialists foolishly desire. It does not consider religion to be either a figment of the Pope's imagination, nor a sneaky trick of oppressors, interested in enslaving the people."* In his first parliamentary address he would even say: *"God will help me successfully realize my difficult task."* It is not likely that **Mussolini** himself had undergone some form of religious awakening, but rather that he was following in the teachings of **Machiavelli** *(who saw the Vatican as one of the major obstacles on the path to Italy's unification)*, or, to paraphrase **Ernst Niekish**: *"for the sake of Italy I*

am capable even of Catholicism."

Another group to have found its home in Fascism, representatives of the old nationalism, were the easiest to assimilate, moreover, Fascism had transformed it thoroughly and made it accessible to the wide masses of people, releasing it from the tired and dying stuffy cabinets of the upper crust of society. Back in 1919 the Fascist and Nationalist programs had nothing in common, but over the years the differences were washed away, and the Nationalists clearly saw the realization in Fascism of ideas that were so dear to them. Eventually the Nationalists would formally integrate into Fascism in the March of 1923. Corradini correctly summarized, that the two movements held the same beliefs, but approached them from two different directions: old Nationalism was a pre-war phenomenon, exclusive to the elites, whereas Fascism held within itself a post-war, new Nationalism of the masses, one that we commonly recognize today as THE definition of nationalism as such. This exact same development, by other means, would arise in Germany through the NSDAP.

With all Fascist forces consolidated, organized, armed and ideologically prepped, **Mussolini** was ready to finally seize power. On the 24th of October, 1922, a Fascist congress takes place in Naples. Besides the delegates, tens of thousands of Blackshirts arrive into the city, to see, to hear, to salute their leader, to demonstrate the power of Fascism. The proceedings took on the appearance of a fair or festival, Fascist songs could be heard throughout the city, the locals took to the streets to partake in the Fascists' uplifting merriment. **Mussolini's** speech had once again contained an ultimatum to the state, the final ultimatum: ***"If the government does not give in to the wishes of those, who represent the nation, the blackshirts will march on Rome.***"

The next day **Mussolini** leaves Naples, the congress is declared to be over and the Blackshirts disappear without a trace. The March on Rome has begun! In the minds of the Blackshirts this was a formality, they already de facto ruled the country, it was simply time to recognize that fact in the highest offices of power. They push onward to the capitol, *"in the name of the dead and those who would live in the future"* another parallel to Codreanu. The Nationalist Blueshirts rush out to join them on the march. Meanwhile Rome is still stuck in petty parliamentary intrigues, now joined by wild rumors of supposed coalition plans and other political combinations, as if blind to the approach of the Fascist Dragon.

On the 27th Rome is surrounded by the mobilized army of Blackshirts, finally silencing the mill of petty politics behind the

curtains of parliament. Fascism issues its proclamation, saying how it has marched to overthrow *"the political class of the weak and miserable, who in the course of 4 long years were unable to give the nation a real government."* The proclamation ends with these words: *"We call upon the Almighty and the souls of our 500 thousand martyrs to bear witness, that we are moved by a singular purpose, united by a singular will, ignited by a singular passion: to help save, and to serve for the greatness of our Fatherland."*

At the eleventh hour Facta manages to grow some backbone, and on the night of the 28th he declared the whole of Italy to be under siege. Rome was turned into a huge military camp and some felt that the nation was but a spark away from a full blown civil war, were it not for the King, or rather, were it not for **Mussolini's** ultimatum to the King. When Facta brought his declaration of Martial Law *(which de facto was already enacted)* to **King Victor Emmanuel III**, the King refused to sign it. The very same day the government resigned. **Mussolini** receives a telegram, delivered on behalf of the King, where he is invited to give the King consult. **Mussolini** replies, that he sees no reason to bother over consultations. In the next telegram he is offered to organize the Cabinet of Deputies. On the 29th **Mussolini** appears in Rome and is immediately given audience with the King. An hour later he emerges from his meeting and returns to his hotel, surrounded by the masses who await his speech: *"Fascists! Citizens! Fascism has achieved Total Victory! I have been summoned to Rome – to rule. In a few hours you will not have a ministry, but a government. Long Live Italy, Long Live the King, Long Live Fascism!"*

ITALIAN CHARACTER

Any national character has its extremes, the people at their best and their worst, however, both stem from the same source, same roots, same blood, two sides of the same coin. The characteristic root of Italian character seems to be their desire to have it all, which manifests in their reaction to the outcome of the War, the slogan of *"mutilated victory."* A different people might have reacted in a tamer manner and felt that they should be glad for what they *did* secure and settle for less than everything they hoped for. One could think of the English character and the British Empire – more calculating, more *mature* in a certain sense of the word, ready to accept lesser deals but always looking for other avenues to exploit. However the Italian spirit is of a different sort.

At their worst Italians seem to be indecisive, tentative, shy – they still look to their desires with hopeful eyes, though lack the daring to actually reach for it with full strength, instead opting for very timid gestures. This can be seen in the Parliamentary games we've gone over before, namely how the government attempted to befriend or placate both the bourgeoisie and the socialists, ultimately giving in to the latter, who practiced more daring, while the bourgeois often times conceded to the demands of the state. *"One cannot sit on two chairs"* but this is exactly what each Italian government tried to, in fact they tried to sit on all the chairs at the same time. They'd push electoral reforms to help them secure their standing and grant power to enact other reforms, and it blew up in their face each time. In short, at their worst Italians still want it all, but are unable to have any of it.

At their best, however, Italians are wild, reckless, daring and want to get everything out of life, while having the audacity to actually go for it, hence they can't help but hate with a passion all that is indecisive and timid. Life is for the living, turn everything into an adventure – that is the Italian outlook. When the Italian soldier got bored of sitting in the trenches for weeks on end with the frontline remaining unchanged, he gave birth to the reckless Arditi, who would storm over no man's land with daggers in their teeth and bombs in their hands to take over the enemy trench. While the timid negotiations of the Italian state led to the proclamation of Fiume becoming an independent city-state, passionate poet D'Annunzio assembles volunteers to take it by force, establishes a Regency, and then funds it with piracy, all the while his faithful followers have play-fights with live weapons and grenades. This *"country of museums"* births the Futurist movement that is ready to smash the

past to pieces *(and their enemies, the "pasteists" – passéiste)* – Italians are not statues, they are race cars with no breaks! Marinetti seeks to remove any and all sources of the worst Italian qualities, even in food: *"No more pasta, as it causes lassitude, pessimism and lack of passion."* All these figures sing of their love of life and danger:

"Let me breathe! Let me drink the wind, feel danger, extinguish the sparks and stars of my unrest! Let me again experience silence, victory and night!"

D'Annunzio

"It is not possible to root our desire, to fight passion is to sin against life."

D'Annunzio

"We advocate a plunge into shadowy death beneath the white and staring eyes of the Ideal.... And we ourselves will furnish the example, abandoning ourselves to the furious Seamstress of battles who, having sewn us into a handsome scarlet uniform, garish in the sun, will anoint our hair with flames, our hair brushed back by bullets . . ."

Marinetti

"For my part, I have only one proposition: dare everything."

Italo Balbo

While the Italian at his worst is afraid of extremes, the Italian at his best wants to embrace all the extremes, which, ironically, leads the *"Yoga"* movement of D'Annunzio's Fiume to question the notion of dictatorship: they do not believe that any one man is capable of accepting many views and many extremes. **Guido Keller** declared that it was the dialectic capacity to embrace opposing positions that was the sure sign of the fullness of life. In contrast, the dictate of a single person created a devastating monotony, which was negation of life itself. To dare wish and strive for embracing of all the extremes of life, yet distrusting one man to rule and be capable of doing exactly that – this in of itself is a contradiction, one the Italian soul dares to embrace regardless.

One may think these aspirations of the Italian soul to be ludicrous, yet they are, in fact, absolutely real and organic, an expression of a deeper truth that permeates all of life and finds its most acute expression in the Italian people: there is no creation

without destruction, no life without death, and it is always darkest just before the dawn. To revive Italian spirit it must break the past; to truly live it must embrace danger and challenge death, or as Balbo had put it, to know ***"the pride of peril"***; to help the sun rise over Italy once more it had to first be blocked out with the smoke of burning socialist collectives.

"… the sword's double edge, it represents a twofold power of the Word, creative and destructive, which takes us back precisely to the vajra. Indeed, the latter also symbolizes a force that, although one in its essence, is manifested under two aspects that are contrary in appearance, although complementary in reality. These two aspects, just as they are represented by the two edges of the sword or other similar weapons, are here represented by the two opposite points of the vajra; this symbolism is moreover valid for the totality of cosmic forces…"

Rene Guenon, Symbols of Sacred Science

Therefore, the history of Fascism's rise to power is not only one of the struggle between the Red Advance and the Fascist Dragon on one hand, but also between the two sides of the Italian soul on the other. The Italian state and socialists are a perfect crystallization of that passiveness and timidity, the indecisive nature of Italians that makes them waddle around clumsily at their lowest point. Were the state more decisive it could have possibly pushed through its reforms and kept the Red Advance at bay. Had the socialists been more decisive they would have chosen to either support the war effort or use the war to the advantage of their revolutionary goals, instead they chose passivity, and when history offered them another chance to have it all they once again proved to be too timid.

We repeatedly insist in our writings that there is a single Worldview from which all our champions hail, how both NS Germany and Fascist Italy represent the same thing at their core, but are different expressions thereof. Italian Fascism is indeed the distinct expression of the Italian character at its best, it is the manifestation of their National Truth and through it a manifestation of larger Truth that we all serve. Just look back to the colorful assortment of Fascism's supporters, the different and often opposite extremes that were united by it as one, reconciled in the discovery of their common fundamental nature. If we're to again quote Guenon from the same book we will find Fascism as the ***axis*** of the Italian people: *"the axis is the place where all oppositions are reconciled and vanish, or in other words the place of perfect*

equilibrium, which Far-Eastern traditions designate as the "Invariable Middle."" And soon Fascism would become the axis to all of Italy, granting it true unity, completing the work of the Risorgimento.

And much to the contrary of the fears held by members of the *Yoga* movement, Fascism could never have succeeded, were it not led by a leader who did, in fact, embrace life in its totality. While Adolf Hitler was *larger than life*, **Mussolini** was ***as large as life***. In terms offered to us by Savitri Devi, one could argue that **Mussolini** was actually more of a *man **in** time* than *man above time*, more lightning than sun *(as opposed to Hitler being more sun and not enough lightning)*, but he came at a turning point in history, when time itself demanded the birth of those who would struggle against it – a season for all things, a time for negation, and a time for *negation of negation.* A period of time when even pure lightning would herald the coming sun.

Mussolini would unconsciously wish for that, which fate desired, if we are to recall the words of Ernst Jünger, while the marxist **Clara Zetkin** would go as far as to say that "*Mussolini <u>was fate.</u>"* Meanwhile Ustryalov would characterize **Mussolini** as foremost a practitioner, rather than a theoretician, moreover, he describes him as "*a great artist of action."* All of which is to say, that **Mussolini** was a masterful conductor of life itself, he instinctively felt its ebb and flow and knew how to direct the course of events, while everyone else were swept away by them, helpless to influence them in any way.
"Mussolini ist eine Urkraft" – "Mussolini is an Elemental Force."
"An acute sense of the masses, political intuition, thirst for action and will to power, dexterity of an arriviste, organizational skill, a living practical mind with the temperament of an authentic Italian, a strong pen, and vivid speech – Mussolini is generously endowed with these qualities, invaluable in the era of revolutionary crisis."

<u>Ustryalov</u>

We can likewise provide some more relevant quotations from Carl Jung, which are seemingly overlooked in favor of the one quote that we used to introduce this article:

"*Mussolini has a certain vitality about him. He is a man – natural [and] warm. … He speaks as a real person."*

"*Mussolini is a man of physical strength. When you see him you are aware of it at once. He is [the] original man and he enjoys a military parade with the zest of a small boy at a circus."*

"Mussolini is all that he is on the surface, whereas Hitler is not."

"With the zest of a small boy at a circus" – one can easily see in this the manifestation of that distinct Italian character at its best, one that regards the whole of life as a playground. This attitude likewise leaves one very open to, and appreciative of the humors of life or what others would describe as *"God having a sense of humor,"* something that **Sir Oswald Mosley** attests to in his autobiography, describing it as **Mussolini** having *"a peculiar sense of fun, a lively appreciation of life's ups and downs"*:

"His humour was simple and direct; it had almost a barrack-room savour. He said to me on arrival one day: 'Do you know who sat in that chair yesterday? — The Chief Rabbi of Italy. Do you know what he said to me? — We Jews rise on top of you Gentiles like oil on water. — The effrontery of him. Do you know what happened last night? — he dropped dead.' Mussolini slapped his big thigh and roared with laughter."

Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life

Mussolini and his followers could be deservedly regarded as scoundrels, rebels and *"thugs,"* but it all contains that Italian charm of a grin and a wink, never simply malicious, in fact often completely detached of any ill thoughts and instead filled with that childlike thirst for life, to which violence and thuggery were intrinsic. In fact, if one is to observe how children play games involving pirates and bandits, and then look to the antics of the Arditi, the Blackshirts and all Fascists at large including **Mussolini** himself, one can notice, that while the piracy and banditry are now real, no longer just pretend, the Italian Fascist enjoys it all with the same childlike wonder of an innocent game. **Mussolini's** biographies often point out how he was a bully and a troublemaker, but also a natural leader to the other kids in school, and he would retain those youthful, vigorous qualities well into his adult years. A movement of scoundrels, a nation of adventurers, could only be led by a leader of the schoolyard gang:

"… the Italian masses find nothing fake in his gestures, mannerisms, habits, the poses from his cabinet of curiosities, where one can find anything ranging from a "bored God" to an "enraged lion." And truthfully there is nothing deliberately fake in these poses. Each people have their own cultural style."

Ustryalov

All of this is not to say that **Mussolini** did not have his moments of genuine anger and malice, being truly upset, cold or distant, however all of these qualities define **Mussolini** at his worst – some might venture to continue the analogy of youth and say that at his worst **Mussolini** acted like an upset or spoiled child. In the analogy of an elemental force one would easily see in this a typical caprice of nature. Italian passion runs hot, it accepts extremes, which means that they can return to norm just as quickly as they can fly off the handle in the first place:

"When I arrived, Mussolini was in such a rage that none of his associates dared approach him on the subject, and some of them suggested that in my interview I should try to cool him off. I made the attempt, and he took it very well; at first a hard stare of the glittering eyes, and then a most reasonable and realistic discussion."

Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life

Such is the nature of the Italian character, and therefore, the nature of **Mussolini**. As a manifestation lightning, a man in time, he cannot help but embody its ever changing flow. As for **Mussolini's** own take on himself: *"I am an eternal traveler and will never recognize the achieved stage as the final one."*

Yet, it is exactly for that very reason that he is a man in time, more lightning than sun, that he would begin to falter after attaining victory for Fascism in Italy, when certain negative qualities of Italian character would creep in and make him undermine himself, which is the subject matter of our next segment.

MUSSOLINI – MACHIAVELLI'S PRINCE

The whole purpose of Machiavelli's *"Prince"* was to provide a hypothetical leader the manual for the unification of Italy, one that was written in an atmosphere of Italian character at its worst: the various split states that existed across Italy indulged in petty political bickering and backroom dealings, backstabbing and assassination plots, duplicity and treachery. One could only hope to unify this great land by being both Lion and Fox, arguably two aspects of Savitri Devi's *"Lightning"* – force and cunning. And there is absolutely no question that **Mussolini** had armed himself with this manual. He had, in fact, dedicated an entire article, in the 1924 May edition of the Fascist journal *"Hierarchy,"* titled *"Prelude to Machiavelli."* Enemies and friends alike would call him an "Italian of the Renaissance period," a politician who embodied the qualities of the Machiavellian hero, which was either condemnation or praise, depending on who said it.

Mussolini could be rightfully called *Machiavelli's Prince*, the very person for whom that manual had been written, so that he may navigate through a multitude of conniving enemies with both brute force and cunning, all in the service of a singular goal – to unite Italy and her people, Machiavelli's dream realized. It is a manual for struggle against mere politics in service to a greater goal, one that shows how to turn the tools of the enemy against himself and strike at his weak points with appropriate means. Is that not exactly what **Mussolini** had done? He waited out for the Red Advance to overexert itself, focusing instead on rhetoric of external politics, but once he turned his focus inwards he immediately robbed the socialists of their revolutionary appeal, claiming it for his Blackshirts. He'd issue ultimatums and threats when he knew his enemies could not respond in any way other than to his benefit, and wherever the state was passive and inactive he would show up to claim victories for his Fascist legions. He would often bluff, and his enemies could tell that he was, so they ignored him, making them look even more so as indecisive cowards to the masses. However, at times what was perceived only as a mere bluff turned out to be a very real, and devastating blow, to the enemy.

Much is said of Machiavelli's teaching by modern liberal academia, claiming that it separates morality from politics. However, liberal morality is nothing more than bourgeois sentimentalism – of course they would say that! It claims that Machiavelli taught that ends justify the means – yet this is, in reality, the credo of modernity, that any goal will justify the means, like goals of naked power for its own sake,

or naked profiteering. These are the real qualities of present day politics and economics – do whatever it takes to win and make a profit. What Machiavelli taught, in reality, was how GREAT and NOBLE ends justify the means, for Machiavelli indeed pursued a great and noble goal of unifying Italy, specifically in a setting where everyone else would deploy any means at their disposal for the sake of their own petty interests that kept Italy divided. Machiavelli had been accused of preaching exactly that, which he taught to navigate and struggle against. Fight fire with fire, only so can you overcome fire completely, much like how Adolf Hitler had surmised in Mein Kampf, and how both he and Mussolini acted:

"He was ruthless, amoral, brutal when fighting the brutality of the bestial Red gangs of Italy — all those things — but a patriot, a brave man who served what he saw to be great ends. He was too a man of some vision and some sense of beauty, whose epitaph might be expressed in his own words recommending certain qualities which his life and character incarnated:

Youth is beautiful, because it has clear eyes with which to regard and to reflect the vast and tumultuous panorama of the world.

Youth is beautiful because it has a fearless heart that dreads not death."

Sir Oswald Mosley, My Life

In all regards, the "*Prince*" was a manual for a conqueror and unifier, a revolutionary, and during **Mussolini's** rise to power it provided invaluable insight. However, once the ultimate goal was achieved, the time had come to finally do away with the tired old political games established by bourgeois liberalism and the history of Italy's disunity, thus marking the passing point after which the lessons of Machiavelli could be set aside for a different age. It was here, that **Mussolini** had truly faltered and allowed the worst elements of Italian nature to creep in. Somehow he lacked the daring to let go of this manual to his success, and instead continued to regard the politics of his own regime in the same light that he regarded the politics of the liberal state that he had overthrown – the only logical outcome for this would be actions that only served to undermine what he had established.

This attitude wasn't *entirely* unfounded. Italian Fascists would proudly declare: *"It is relatively easy to become a Fascist, but hard to remain one,"* and yet not much was done to enact the full meaning

of these words. In his tireless work for maintaining the unity of his movement and the unity of the Italian people at large he inevitably attracted various opportunistic elements that saw in Fascism a vehicle of personal gain. One Fascist figure had complained *"The cry "who is not with us is against us" has been cast to the four winds! Cowards and profiteers were not deaf to this call, and the good wine was diluted with impure water,"* only to be beaten up by the Fascist youth for his impertinence. During Fascism's rise to power some of these elements could be exploited to its benefit, which **Mussolini** had no qualms about doing, however once victory was achieved time had come to clean house.

Some measures were indeed undertaken for this exact purpose as the movement began the process of weeding out undesirable elements, which led to the expulsion of some 30 thousand members. However, the majority of these measures were targeting the unruly elements of the rank and file, which continued to act in a manner encouraged for the revolutionary period, but severely frowned upon once power has been acquired. A symbolic example of this is how the use of castor oil was made punishable with up to 3 years of prison by the Fascist state. Internal disciplinary measures ranged from reprimand and temporary exclusion, to indefinite exclusion not just from the party but from the entirety of Italy's political life, as well as the *"Traitor"* mark of shame. These measures had turned the Fascist legions from a rambunctious, revolutionary gang, into a well-disciplined military order in service of the nation. *"Not Italy for Fascism, but Fascism for Italy"* as Ustryalov put it.

The problem was that these measures were not enacted widely enough in the higher echelons of the movement, where the most corrosive elements had resided. A hidden parasite is always worse than an undisciplined follower. **Julius Evola** and his *"La Torre"* magazine had become at the time prime objects of disdain among such parasitical elements, who rightly suspected it as a threat to their cushy positions. The pages of *"La Torre"* proclaimed: *"We would like a more radical, intrepid Fascism: a truly absolute Fascism, founded on pure energy and subject to no compromise."*

Considering that **Mussolini** had not established his own dictatorship until January 3rd 1925, having first *(immediately after his victorious March on Rome)* organized an old style parliamentary cabinet and government which included the Popolari, democrats and liberals, this call for Fascism to be more Fascistic rings both true, and very reminiscent of what **Mussolini** had himself said about the Italian Monarchy. To **Mussolini's** *"we are antimonarchist only because the Monarchy is not monarchistic enough"* Evola echoes *"we are*

antiFascist only because Fascism is not Fascistic enough," or if we were to directly quote the latter: *"The label "anti-Fascist" only suits us to the extent that it suits those wishing to go beyond Fascism."*

The entire ordeal surrounding the publication of *"La Torre"* serves as a telling story of the climate within the higher positions of power within the Fascist state:

"Fascist circles were initially shocked by our publication. Soon, however, we were made the object of more violent and brutal reactions, particularly because our "club" was striking at real gangsters: men devoid of all qualifications, who had been awarded the role of arrogant representatives of Fascist 'thought' and 'culture' merely on account of their past as Blackshirts, or their dull fanaticism – a truly pathetic spectacle.

[…]

Accustomed as they were, to acting with impunity, these 'Fascists' turned vicious when faced with our criticism. As they were incapable of defending themselves and addressing our criticism on an intellectual level, they resorted to more direct means. What followed were vile slanders, 'chivalrous' disputes, lawsuits, and acts of physical aggression. For a period of time, I was forced to walk around with a few bodyguards (other Fascists, sympathetic to my cause). Failing to meet their goals, these 'gentlemen', by way of their personal acquaintances, turned to the higher echelons of the Fascist Party, and to its former secretary, Achille Starace.

[…]

Within Fascism, certain men of character met an ill fate because of their denunciation of the misdeeds of powerful, influential members of the Party.

[…]

In strictly cultural terms, however, the Fascist 'revolution' was simply a joke. All that was required in order to become a representative of Fascist 'culture' was to become a member of the Party and to pay formal, conformist tribute to the Duce. All else was more or less irrelevant.

[…]

Instead of starting from scratch, of ignoring fame and big names, instead of subjecting each intellectual candidate to a radical reassessment, Fascism, with provincial and bourgeois ambition, chose to welcome all the 'cultural representatives' of the bourgeoisie, as long as they could give proof of their formal (and irrelevant) adherence to the regime. This led to pathetic cases such as that of the Academia d'Italia, the members of which were largely agnostic or anti-Fascist in their private beliefs. But the same is also true of many other men who were assigned prominent roles within the Fascist cultural establishment and media. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many of these gentlemen now donning a new uniform in democratic, anti-Fascist Italy."

Julius Evola, The Path of Cinnabar

Ultimately **Mussolini** needed to consolidate the party by expelling the undesirable elements and leaving only a loyal band of brothers, a gang, a brotherhood of revolutionary veterans. Hitler had willed such loyalty naturally, **Mussolini** on the other hand should have worked towards the same results, and he had all the qualities to be successful in this endeavor. Instead, he focused foremost on suspicions and distrust of all his comrades, and resorted to using the lessons of Machiavelli against them. Loyalty was never fostered but always questioned, to the point where **Mussolini** would not allow certain figures to occupy a seat of power for too long, fearful of them amassing too many connections and prestige in one place, he would maneuver them to a new post. Some figures would be effectively *"banished"* by their placement in very remote and minuscule positions, until they were finally removed from political life altogether.

Italo Balbo, for example, had been moved around from post to post, each time building a fledgling organization into something noteworthy, only to be sent elsewhere: he would virtually single-handedly be responsible for building up the Fascist Militia, Aviation and Libyan colony. And yet his relationship with **Mussolini** was turbulent as they would go from friends to rivals, in particular Balbo's own charismatic popularity often made **Mussolini** question his loyalty.

"[Mussolini] might easily have created a defense ministry or a general chief of staff with powers over all three services. Balbo made such proposals in 1933, and Mussolini repeatedly turned them down. Such an office, particularly with Balbo at the head of it, as he proposed, posed too great a political threat to the dictator. Italy paid dearly for this decision in 1940."

Mussolini was indeed too much lightning, and once he achieved success he didn't know how to, despite his status as dictator, simply *"rule unabashedly,"* as **Konstantin Leontiev** once advised, and transcend from lightning to sun. Instead he fell back into the kind of petty political intrigue that he had sought to root out.

FASCISM, RACE AND WORLDVIEW

From everything explored in the history segment of this article one should have easily spotted a number of parallels between Italian and German history and how it helped foster a certain national response. The second segment helped provide context as to why that response took on the shape that it did, as opposed to the one taking place in Germany, being in turn a manifestation of the same force through German national character. *"Fascism was born from the rage of warriors."* While German warriors experienced the rage of humiliating defeat, Italian warriors experienced the rage of humiliating victory – the source of humiliation in both cases being the Treaty of Versailles. What truly upsets any warrior is injustice, and the treaty spelled injustice for both nations, if for different reasons, and what motivated the rise of Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany was the desire for justice – to put things into their rightful place, for the true order of things to be restored. In this pursuit of justice their scope kept expanding, as they continued to follow the pattern behind events having unfolded as they did to their source – a fundamentally erroneous view of the world at large, and not just in military, political and societal affairs. Thus, for different reasons yet a common motivation, and by similar avenues, both had come to find the same answers, which led them to the same Worldview. They would gain their strength in that Worldview, which would find its expression through their blood.

Which is where the second segment of this article, dealing with national character, comes in. Germans are more systematic, thus their expression was more coherent, concrete. Meanwhile Italians had a strong instinct and a strong guiding feeling, but one they did not always know how to express in a systemic way, instead opting for artistic expression and intuitive action. **Mussolini's** path towards self-actualization as a Fascist is very much the same as that of many of us today, it is akin to having a general sense of direction, of familiarity that guides us to the source, and only once we have reached it will we see what it all meant in retrospect. Take, for example, **Mussolini's** beginning as a socialist. How many Fascists and National Socialists in general have had a socialist or even communist path? There is clearly something familiar there which can initially draw a searching Fascist to it, however everything else that surrounds that familiarity will inevitably push him away, while granting clarity on what that familiar *something* was.

In his youth, **Mussolini** expressed his view of socialism

thusly: *"Socialism is not a trade deal, not a politician's game, not a dream of the romantic and even less so a sport… Socialism is something cruel, strict, something sewn together from contradictions and violence. It is war; and woe to the softhearted in that war; socialism is a terrible, serious and lofty deed."* There is certainly something Fascist *(and Italian)* about this evaluation, reminiscent of the Conservative Revolutionary and National Socialist evaluation of Socialism. It is more so the Prussian Socialism of **Oswald Spengler**, than of Marx. It is militant and duty bound. Further still, it is elitist: in his socialist youth, on the pages of a provincial socialist paper *"La lotta di classe"* **Mussolini** had written: *"Quality is more important to us than quantity. A select minority, full of firm faith and aware of its goal, is more prized by us than the gentle, tolerant herd, obedient to its pastor and one that runs away at the first howl of a wolf."* Those who had read our previous piece **"Zero Tolerance"** will no doubt immediately realize in this quote further implications that support our stance on Italian Fascism and German National Socialism being expressions of the same Worldview, both in principles and actions.

Yet there are plenty of people who insist on these two national expressions of a common truth to be absolutely different, fueled foremost by liberal academia definitions and categorizations, as well as a reading of *The Doctrine of Fascism* that exists in isolation of the broader context, which we had provided herein. To read the Doctrine of Fascism on its own is to completely miss the story of Fascism's search for itself, which is the story of **Mussolini's** self-actualization.

One of the primary gripes these people *(as well as their fellows from the NS side, who refute Fascism as being something else alien to National Socialism)* have is how, supposedly, Fascism has nothing to do with Race and is foremost centered around the State. The insistently misinterpret **Mussolini's** infamous quote *"All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state."* Both sides believe this means that the state is placed above race and nation, rendering those things secondary, if not irrelevant.

One wonders how the *"classical Fascist"* types would react if they were made familiar with the following thoughts, that Mussolini had expressed in one of his more dismal moods in the spring of 1920: *"To hell with the state in all its forms! The state of yesterday, the state of today, the state of tomorrow. The bourgeois state, the socialist state. The only thing left to those of us loyal to dying individualism, in this sad present and dark future, is the, perhaps absurd, but comforting religion of Anarchy."* Does this quote render Mussolini an anarchist? Does it mean that at a certain period he

was an anarchist or had anarchist leanings, same as how he once was a socialist? Of course not. It is the broader context of history and national character that offers up to us a true answer to the meaning of these words, as well as to the quote on the all-encompassing nature of the state. Think back to our first segment and consider the reality **Mussolini** and all of Italy had faced: a weak and inactive state, one incapable of taking care of its own people, one that had given up the spoils of victory. The sentiment **Mussolini** expressed in 1920 has distinct Futurist tones to it, and also mimics what was said by Italo Balbo when he had returned home from the war: *"To fight, to struggle, to come home to the land of Giolitti, who transformed every ideal into a business proposition? No. Better to deny everything, to destroy everything, in order to renew from the ground up."* In short, **Mussolini's** *"Anarchy"* quote is the other extreme that he dared embrace for a moment in full, when faced with all the weak and impotent forms of statehood before him. One could say, yet again echoing one of his other expressions that for a moment **Mussolini** had become an anarchist *"because the state was not total enough."*

So then, what is the true meaning of the total state quote? It's true meaning is that, of pursuing the goal of an **organic unity**, where the state exists as a manifestation of the nation as a single whole and, as Ernst Jünger would put it, a gestalt: *"that, which is more than the mere sum of its parts,"* the Fascist declaration of the State being a judicial manifestation of the Nation is expressed more succinctly by **Francis Parker Yockey** as *"The State is the form of a nation for action."* The 1921 Fascist Party program expresses these ideas, as well as *(again)* something from Codreanu, almost entirely in the same words: *"The Party regards society, which makes up the state, not as a mere sum of individuals living at a certain point in time in a certain territory, but as an organism, which contains within itself the infinite ranks of past, living and future generations, for whom separate individuals appear as but a passing moment."* Italy, a country with a history of division, united only nominally, while being led by a parliamentary government, the very nature of which is divisive, while also being weak and passive, demanded a State that would *"rule unabashedly"* and one that would become the expression of total unity of a single organism.

"These lofty ideas had to be made flesh and blood. The contents of the national cult had to be unveiled and the desired state visibly displayed. By declaring that "the Fascist organizations must become the Fascist nation," Fascists had set before themselves a grandiose task and took upon themselves an incomparable responsibility.

[…]

Fascism does not deny classes, but subjugates the interests of each one to the interests of the whole, i.e. the nation, organized in a state. Class aspirations are legal, however when one class tries to elevate itself above the state, then, inevitably, the entirety of national life is thrown in disarray.

[…]

… the "nation" is depicted by Fascist ideologues not in the old "arithmetic" and "atomistic" spirit of the french revolutionary doctrine. Rejecting the "mechanical" understanding of society as a sum of equal and free individuals, they declare the "organic" understanding, which accounts for the economic division of functions and subsequent social differentiation."

Ustryalov

The total state quote is thus a promise by **Mussolini**, that Italy as a country, and Italians as a nation, would never suffer artificial and mechanical division again, a sentiment that in no way contradicts the tenets of German National Socialism, but mirrors them: the State exists to serve the nation, which is exactly why during Fascism's rise to power in Italy it had expressed its readiness to destroy the existing state, for failing to fulfill its role as the carrier of national values. No part of the whole can be allowed to rule over the whole, that is the most succinct meaning of that quote. **Miguel Serrano**, in his *Golden Cord*, said that *"The Jew elevates the part over the whole."* Fascism and National Socialism put everything in their rightful place. **Mussolini** reaffirms this, and much more of what we talked about in this article**:** *"It is often said that we lack a doctrine. Yet I do not know any other ideological or political movement that is armed with a doctrine more solid and well defined. We are facing unquestionable realities: a state that must be strong; a government that has a duty to defend itself, for it defends the nation from destructive work; the cooperation of classes, respect for religion; developing all national energies; that is the doctrine of life."*

Indeed, the goal of the Fascist State was to serve the nation and organize its energies for action, in which all would be elevated. One can hardly deny D'Annunzio's influence in Fascism, so let us recall his Fiume constitution *"Carta di Carnaro,"* namely article 18, which defines the State as *"the common will and common aspiration of the people towards the more elevated state of spiritual and material*

being." Julius Evola in turn likewise defined the quintessential function of the State, which mirrors the ultimate Fascist and National Socialist ambition:

"The higher and more genuine legitimization of a true political order, and thus of the State itself, lies in its anagogical function: namely, in arousing and nourishing the individual's disposition to act and to think, to live, to struggle, and eventually to sacrifice himself for something that goes beyond his mere individuality."

Julius Evola, Men Among the Ruins

Still, the *"classical Fascists"* will question in what context Italian Fascists talked about nation, claiming that it has nothing to do with ethnicity and race: *"Fascism is not racist!"* they cry. We could, once again, go over how it was Fascism that introduced the new nationalism that took the place of the old, 19th century nationalism, how it became a thing of the masses and dealt with blood, the 14 points of Woodrow Wilson and mutilated victory of territories populated by ethnic Italians that were not relinquished to Italy – or we could simply remind them what **Mussolini** had said during the first Fascist congress in Milan: *"We cannot remain deaf to the struggle for Fiume, we deeply feel the living nature of the ties that bind us not only with the Italians of Zara, Ragusa, Cattaro, but also with the Italians of Ticino, even with those Italians that do not wish to be Italian – with the Italians of Corsica, Italians living across the ocean, with that huge family that we wish to unite under the aegis of common racial pride."*

One can find no traces of civic nationalism within Italian Fascism, instead it would constantly reaffirm the nature of race and blood and their constancy through the ages. In fact, Fascism had officially proclaimed itself to be, in point 4 of The Fascist Decalogue, *"the genius of a race reborn, of latin tradition, unchangingly active in our thousands of years old history, a return to the roman and simultaneously christian idea of state, a synthesis of the great past with a radiant future."*

And what did **Mussolini** have to say about Race? Well…

"Well we, Fascisti, want to bring into every city, into every part of the country, even the most remote, the pride and passion of belonging to the most noble Italian race; the race which has produced Dante, which has given Galileo, the greatest masterpieces of art, Verdi, Mazzini, Garibaldi and d'Annunzio to the world, and which has produced the people who won Vittorio Veneto."

Speech in Ferrara, April 4, 1920

"Italy had twenty-seven million inhabitants in 1870, she has now fifty million; forty million of whom live in the Peninsula, and represent the most homogeneous block in Europe, because, compared with Bohemia, for instance, where five millions of the Czecho race govern seven millions of other races, Italy has only 180,000 German subjects on the Upper Adige and 360,000 Slavs, all the rest forming one compact whole."

Speech in Trieste, September 20, 1920

"In the first place she (the Italian nation) has a sure foundation, and that is the vitality of our race."

Speech in Trieste, September 20, 1920

"I have an unbounded faith in the future greatness of the Italian people. Ours is, among the European peoples, the largest and most homogeneous. … Unlike the pessimists who believe that everything is great in other people's houses, while everything is too small in their own, we have pride in our race and our history."

Speech in Trieste, February 6, 1921

"How then was this Fascismo born… it was born of the profound and perennial need of this our Mediterranean and Aryan race…"

Speech in Bologna, April 3, 1921

"…we feel those bonds of race to be alive and vital which bind us, not only to the Italians of Zara, Ragusa and Cattaro, but also to those of the Canton Ticino and Corsica, to those beyond the oceans, to all that great family of fifty million men whom we wish to unite in the same pride of race."

Speech in Bologna, April 3, 1921

"Italy is not a State, she is a nation, because from the Alps to Sicily there is the fundamental unity of our race, our customs, our language and our religion."

Speech in Milan, October 4, 1922

"It must not be forgotten that, besides the minority that represent actual militant politics, there are forty millions of excellent Italians who work, by their splendid birth-rate perpetuate our race…"

Speech Delivered in the Chamber, November 16, 1922

"We, here and everywhere, are ready for any battle so that we may uphold the foundations of our race and of our history."

Speech in London, December 12, 1922

"Let me first of all say how happy I am that we should have met in these magnificent rooms which furnish evidence of the strength and beauty of our race."

Speech in Rome, January 2, 1923

"It is obvious that the problem of Italian expansion in the world is a problem of life or death for the Italian race."

Speech in Milan, March 30, 1923

"I have looked you well in the face, I have recognized that you are superb shoots of this Italian race which was great when other people were not born, of this Italian race which three times gave our civilization to the barbarian world, of this Italian race which we wish to mold by all the struggles necessary for discipline, for work, for faith."

Speech in Sassari, June 10, 1923

"…Fascism, representing an irresistible movement for the regeneration of the race, was bound to carry with it this island where the Italian race is manifested so superbly."

Speech in Cagliari, June 12, 1923

"Rome is always, as it will be tomorrow and in the centuries to come, the living heart of our race!"

Speech in Rome, June 25, 1923

"It is therefore necessary to take great care of the future of the race, starting with measures to look after the health of mothers and infants."

Speech of the Ascension, May 26, 1927

"The entire white race, the Western race, can become submerged by other races of colour that multiply with a rhythm unknown to our own. Blacks and yellows are thus at the door? Yes, they are at the door, and not only because of their fecundity but also because of their race consciousness and their future in the world."

Preface to Decline of Births:

Death of Peoples by Richard Korherr, 1928

"Peace with honor and justice is a Pax Romana…a peace in conformity with the character and temperament of our Latin and Mediterranean race which I wish to exalt before you because it is the race which has given to the world, among thousands of others, Caesar, Dante, Michelangelo, and Napoleon; a race of creators and constructors, ancient and strong, determined and universal, which has given the keynote to the world three times in the course of the centuries."

Speech in Florence, October 23, 1933

"This is why the racial laws of the empire will be rigorously observed and that all who sin against them will be expelled, punished, imprisoned. Because for the empire to be preserved the natives must be clearly and forcefully aware of our superiority."

Speech in Rome, October 25, 1938

"Our rural policy follows this course…to preserve and pass on the intrinsic virtues of the Italian race…"

Speech at the Argentina Theatre in Rome, January 22, 1939

"Our capacity to recuperate in moral and material fields is really formidable and constitutes one of the peculiar characteristics of our race."

Speech to the Blackshirts of Rome, February 23, 1941

Moreover, **Mussolini's** precise ambitions regarding Fascism's attitude to race can be evaluated in full if we are to read Julius Evola's article, dedicated to how **Mussolini** had personally entrusted *him*, this public and outspoken critic of Fascism for *"not being Fascist enough,"* with developing the official Fascist Racial Doctrine, one that was to be built on the foundation of Evola's tripartite conception of Race as Body (biology), Mind (psychology) and Spirit (spirituality). Below, we are giving the full text of this article, which I had translated on the 2nd of October, 2014, while providing underscoring for the most potently relevant parts of our argument, though we must insist that our readers familiarize themselves with this article in full, as it further sheds light on, and reinforces points made in this article previously in other matters:

Mussolini e il razzismo

Il Meridiano d'Italia, December 1951

In September of 1941 I was summoned to Palazzo Venezia. I did not expect it to be Mussolini himself who wanted to speak to me. Pavolini was present during our conversation. Mussolini told me, that he had read my work "The Synthesis of the Racial Doctrine" published by Hoepli, that he approved of it and that he saw in the ideas presented therein the basis for the formation of an independent Fascist and anti-materialist racism. "It is exactly the sort of book we needed" he said.

To understand the importance of these statements one must remember the state of affairs concerning racism in Italy. Some months prior to this Mussolini thought it necessary to take a stance on the race problem and gain equal footing with the German ally in this field as well. The most immediate motive was the desire to energize the sense of race and racial dignity due to the presence of natives in the new Empire. The other reason was the antiFascist stance of international judaism - foremost North-American. The racial question combines goals of internal, selective, cultural and ethnic matters. That is why Mussolini assisted the publication of the so called "Manifesto of Italian Racism" that contained some ten points; it was placed in the journal "Defense of the Race" (Difesa della Razza), and later on two racial institutions were created - one in the Ministry of Popular Culture and the other in the Internal Affairs Ministry.

Unfortunately the situation was unsatisfactory on the whole. There were not enough precedents of serious preparation and specific studies in Italy for such action, and racial ideas were completely uncharted territory for Italian "intellectuals." Thus the group that compiled the "Manifesto" and the "Defense of Race" staff presented a strange and hastily created union. Some old science anthropologists were put in the same bag with perked up racists, and journalists and writers who had only occasionally touched the subject matter - all at once. Thus a general impression of dilettantism emerged, where too often small polemics and slogans took the place of a serious and unified doctrine: a doctrine that shouldn't have gotten itself lost in either biological specialism or vulgar antisemitism, but emerge at its core on the level of a common worldview, and act as a politics and ethics forming idea. I was moved to tackle this subject because of not so kind remarks I heard from abroad regarding Fascism's handling of the racial issue. I began to extract from the traditional and aristocratic idea, with which I was associated, everything that instead of select applications and conclusions could have the

meaning of an organic racial doctrine. So appeared the first articles and notes, published in various Fascist periodicals, and then the aforementioned book.

The central thesis, defended by me, was, in short, the following: the question of race for man cannot be discussed in same terms nor have the same meaning as for a cat or a purebred horse. True man, besides the biological and bodily aspects, also possesses a soul and spirit. Thus, comprehensive racism had to consider all three components: body, soul and spirit. Accordingly it is apt to talk about Racism of First Degree, regarding purely biological, anthropological and eugenic issues; next about Racism of Second Degree, regarding "race of soul," in other words the forms of character and affective reactions; finally, the crowning "race of spirit," regarding the highest elements - the general vision of this and the world beyond, of destiny, life, action, in other words those "highest values" that distinguish people from each other and make them unequal. The Classical ideal, interpreted racially, is harmony and unity of these three "races" in the highest kind.

Mussolini accepted this viewpoint without question. I will not take upon myself the responsibility of many memoir writers, who put in quotes literal words said by the Duce. However I can, still, say in general terms the point of what Mussolini had told me, demonstrating an original level of preparation. "The Threefold concept of racism - Mussolini said to me thusly - avoids the zoological and biological mistakes that to some degree are in-bedded in German racism; it establishes the primacy of spiritual values that make up the basis of our tradition and the Fascist idea. Furthermore, it possesses great political value. You have correlated the three aspects of the race issue with the three parts of the human being, which were also highlighted by Aristotle. However it would be better to defer to Plato [here I can say that I am repeating Mussolini word for word], who moreover correlates those three parts with the three societal castes. Race of body correlates to the pure masses, demos, "which is not in itself invalid, but is a force used by the masters" [exact words]; race of soul can be correlated to Plato's "warriors" or "guardians" while the race of spirit can correlate to the top caste of thinkers, philosophers and artists."

Speaking honestly, despite the alarmed signs given to me by friend Pavolini, I allowed myself to interrupt Mussolini and say: "Please make note, Duce, that thinkers, philosophers and artists in the modern sense Plato would have expelled from his state. It is the sages - sophoi - that Plato saw at the top of his ideal state, but not "intellectuals" who present in themselves something else entirely."

"Very well then, we're talking about sages" - said Mussolini, smiling.

The Myth of New Italy

While race is typically considered a concrete, naturalistic and fatalistic factor, in my book I supported a dynamic conception: new races can be formed, while other races can mutate or disappear as a result of internal, spiritual factors, or what I called the "internal race." As an example I pointed to the same jewish type, that isn't derived from an original pure race, but was molded by a millennial tradition; and nowadays the yankee type has particular features that characterize an incredible ethnic mix, that came about under the influence of the civilization or pseudo-civilization of the USA. In our discussion Mussolini unquestioningly accepted this idea as the basis of "active racism," that goes hand in hand with the creative goals of Fascism's highest ambitions. The ideal was thus: the action of internal factors, strict discipline and high ideal tension had to slowly form from the heterogeneous substance of Italian people and stabilize a new type of elite, "the Fascist race of man." Duce told me that he is convinced in the soundness that processes of this type can achieve; he mentioned that he himself was astounded to see many times among the youth division Littorio and blackshirts a new type, not just in terms of behavior, but even in terms of physical, bodily characteristics, almost as if a result of a natural selection and formation effect of which I spoke in my book. These beginnings were, unfortunately, destroyed. With the fall of Italy it was not the new supreme race, but the inferior race of our people that was destined to come out on top and define the glory of "liberation" and the "Second Risorgimento."

Political and spiritual racism must possess a "myth," that is to say a power-idea, capable of crystallizing the energy of a given collective environment. This was precisely the idea of a superior race. It is well known that in this regard is has long since existed in the Aryan "myth." Indeed, not just racists have admitted, that the ancient civilizations of India, Iran, Greece and Rome and then the German one as well, had been derived from a unified racial root or the original prehistoric superior race, called "Aryan" - in the same way as correlating languages, religions, concepts of rights and so on point to a common root. Naturally, German racism attempted to turn things pro domo sua ***[in defense of their own interests]*** *believing the northern Germanic tribes to be direct descendants of the original pure "Aryan" race and placing the Nordic-Aryan idea at the heart of the political action and National-Socialism's worldview. But such a*

monopolistic claim lacks any serious foundation. Using the same premise, I presented the roman-Aryan idea as the central reference point for Fascist racism: it concerns forces that, having differentiated from the same Aryan root, molded the image of that original and courageous Rome. Roman-Aryan idea, parallel to the Nordic-Aryan idea, maintains its autonomy and its own dignity; it can guarantee both these things in our movement and remove any suspicions of it following national-socialist concepts. Still, it does not lose connection with them, but to the contrary, overcomes them in the name of connecting with values and style elements of a much greater and universal tradition.

Mussolini told me, that this part of my book intrigued him in particular. He had spoken before: "We dream of a Roman Italy." Now an opportunity presented itself to specify this formula. To return the Roman-Aryan idea not just as a rhetorical and academic idea, but as a forming force, foremost as a view of life ("race of spirit"), then character and style of behavior ("race of soul"), and, finally, if possible, even as a new bodily, physical type ("race of body"), so that the outward appearance be a worthy representation of the internal race; and on the contrary, limit and correct the questionable elements of our people, speaking about "Mediterranean" mixing and "brotherhood of bastards" (Mussolini had already made such a comment, talking about the so called "latinhood"), in spiritual harmony with the legacy of the Holy Roman Empire - this was the maximum program of active racism, which Mussolini was ready to accept. In our conversation Duce touched on some technical problems, specifically about heredity. Then we spoke of some practical initiatives. I will write on those in a next article. But one other thing has to be mentioned here. When speaking of racism some people understand only antisemitism, concentration camps, gas chambers and other such things. Here it must be made clear that for serious racism antisemitism presents in itself only a special and secondary question and not at all the primary one. In this case the jewish threat, without a doubt, exists, but it must be felt and defined more so as an internal danger, rather than an external. This was the primary point in the ideas formulated by me: it is of little use to be "Aryan" and have "pure race" in body and blood, if in spirit and character, in the "next race" you are a jew, a man of the "eastern race" or someone else of that kind. Thus, if one is to speak of "Aryans" seriously, one undertakes great responsibility. So appeared the chance to solve racial issues without any fanaticism and intrigue, paying attention to the core matter, giving to each his own. Approving my formulas Mussolini was entering this sphere of ideas, that would have

distinguished Fascist racism from the national-socialist one in its extreme and not well thought out aspects.

Blood and Spirit

After Mussolini considered the arguments presented in my previous articles, I told him that his approval of my classification of racial issues would be a helping step towards initiatives that I had already launched abroad myself. Indeed, for a long time I was in contact with certain German circles, being a guest at conferences and presentations, and racial issues were among the topics I had discussed. Now my formulas had stirred a particular interest and the basis of deep cooperation could be seen in the meeting of the Roman-Aryan myth with the Nordic-Aryan myth, capable of spiritually fortifying the political union of the Axis. Thus it was a topic of conversation to create for this purpose a new Italo-Germanic journal. And this interested my German friends foremost because while particular necessary criticism of biological, materialist and unyielding nationalistic racism would never be tolerated from a German, statements of an Italian author would've met a different reception.

I had given all of this to Mussolini and asked him if I am allowed the right, on the grounds of his more than flattering evaluation, to develop such initiatives and present my formulas as official Fascist ones. Mussolini, of course, answered positively. Thus he gave me the right to give the German translation of my book that was in the works a Fascist blessing (its German name - "The Synthesis of the Fascist Racial Doctrine," Grundrisse der faschistischen Rassenlehre, Runge Verlag, Berlin) and use his seal of high approval.

As for the journal project, which was named "Blood and Spirit - Italo-Germanic journal on the issues of worldview and race," Mussolini told me, that he also approves of it. It could be published in two languages, to distribute it accordingly, under the edit of both the Fascist and the national-socialist parties. However, Mussolini wanted to first define its primary points, coordinated with the possible staff of this journal.

And here I had begun a somewhat unpleasant job, as this meant gathering more or less qualified elements and then bringing them to a consensus. The head of the race service in the Ministry of Popular Culture, one Guido Landra, a racist by circumstances, who "demilitarized" after June 25th ***[When Mussolini was deposed in a coup]****, was successfully replaced with a more qualified and prepared Fascist, valuable for his international connections, Dr Alberto Luchini. With his agreement a number of*

difficult meetings were organized with people who, as was known, were immediately nominated in various sectors of Fascism (it would be risky to name them, in order to see what Fascist and racist goals they've achieved). In the end we've defined the desired program points. I personally presented them to Mussolini. He accepted them in full, after that we talked about going to Berlin in order to conduct analogical organizational activities. In the German capital I've reestablished my connections with Alfred Rosenberg, Walter Groß and other people, and we began discussing the formulated points and the journal's direction. But at this moment I had found out about certain steps of the Italian embassy that had baffled my friends so much so that nothing serious could be accomplished and I had to return to Rome. That is when I found out about the sabotage that happened while I was away. Firstly, the representatives of the first "Racial manifesto" had spoken out and attacked me on several points - they were afraid that the new, more organic formula would do them harm. Then some catholic machinations had occurred. Some professor found a way to meet with Mussolini on the premise of wanting to present to him some books on christian archaeology. But in reality this meeting was used in order to express to Duce concerns of the catholic sphere that had arisen after the approval of my initiatives. Catholics could tolerate a biological racial doctrine, but they felt an imminent danger in the 'soul' presentation of the racial problem and in the "Aryan" revision of many accepted religious and moral values of questionable origin that dominate in the West. A closer and more official cooperation with the German team further increased the danger of the project. But this man with Jesuit diplomacy attempted to present in tendentious light aspects, according to which the racial doctrine with its selection principle, of superiority and differences within one people was not coinciding with the premises of mass nationalism - and so on in same style. All of this in my absence had produced in Mussolini some abashment, the reflection of which I had felt in Berlin. I requested an explanation and further orders and waited for an answer. Meanwhile another one of my initiatives could be given the green light via Luchini.

The subject matter was the printing of the "Italian Race Atlas," a result of the first systematic research. Naturally the name "Italian race" is nonsense. Race is a basic reality that cannot be identified with a people. In a people race enters various combinations where certain elements that dominate now give way to others later. The topic was the first study of such components. In different regions of Italy prefects had to mark certain typical and ancient families, whose representatives were evaluated by a special

commission. This commission was led by Luchini. It was also made up of Dr Rossi from the anthropological side (race of body), head of experimental psychology, professor L.F. Claus (Berlin) for the "race of soul" and finally myself for "spiritual race." The results were compiled in a beautiful publication, richly illustrated with vivid pictures of the most significant types met in our research and foremost those, who still retained the higher, original "Roman-Aryan" type of our people. Everything was already prepared. Unfortunately in the meantime events were approaching their climax, all the energy had to be gathered for a big number of emergency tasks, and the revolution, the impact of which on Fascism should not be underestimated, did not follow. Still it is good that the contents of these retrospective articles is known.

A few more words of a personal nature. After Mussolini had spoken to me, using such unexpected high praise speaking of my book, he told Pavolini to reflect that in the press, because he wanted to know what impression it made. Thus one famous "rolling paper" was sent to the newspapers. But in recent times there were many of these and those directives were executed only rarely; and practically all the Italian "intellectuals" were in agreement to sabotage "racist" ideas no matter what - pour cause [for this reason]. As a result the "big press" published very few articles about my book. This annoyed Mussolini and issued a more categorical order. Naturally, a rain of articles followed and, understandably, all giving high praise. As a result my name gained fame that my other books, perhaps, would have never gotten. And many came to know of me only as a "racist," and this fame exists to this day. But as I said, I've delved into racism accidentally, as part of formulating a much larger ensemble of political traditional ideas, wanting to prevent deviations that could already be seen in this field in both Italy and Germany.

Only the most delusional would maintain after all of this, that Italian Fascism had no racial core, no interest in blood, in the creation of the superior race. Still, to further drive home this point, we'll make light of a few other interesting facts, related to the issue of Italian colonies.

In the historical segment of this article we made light of Italy's issue of overpopulation and the desire for territorial expansion and colonies that would provide living space for the Italian people. With Fascism's coming to power and the subsequent improvement of Italian life, many Italians who had left the homeland to live abroad began to come back. In 1913 there were 900 thousand Italians in emigration, in 1925 there were 320, in 1926 – 280, and in that last year 150

thousand Italians made their way back to Italy. Hence Italy worked towards resettlement of its population into the colonies, where the matter of racial relations began to manifest, resulting in several notable things, especially in the Libyan colony, which had come to be governed by Italo Balbo:

"He favored those Libyans whom he thought best fitted into the Italian scheme of things. The peoples of the coastal regions he admired because he regarded them as "superior races influenced by Mediterranean civilization" and capable of absorbing the new Fascist values and institutions. The Negroid peoples of the Fezzan, he concluded, were not at that level and must be left to their own devices under military rule.

[…]

He was also very strict when matters of European "prestige" were at stake. Two Libyans, accused of having "touched" an Italian woman in the street, were sentenced to eight years in prison for having "violated racial prestige." Foreign journalists remarked on the excessive formal respect the Italians demanded from Libyans. An English traveler commented, "The natives are browbeaten as nowhere else in North Africa," and noted the "embarrassing obsequiousness" of the Libyans. Even in the most remote oases, they "snap and quiver to attention" as soon as a European appears. In Tripoli, bootblacks gave the Fascist salute and bellowed "Evviva il Re-Imperatore, evviva Mussolini, evviva l'Italia," before they grabbed a customer's shoes.

Yet European visitors also remarked that under Balbo, Italians in some ways treated Libyans with a surprising informality and ease that was not typical of European colonial regimes. Italians thought nothing of working side by side in the fields with Libyans; Italian officials greeted Libyan notables with great cordiality and friendliness. There was little discrimination in the use of public facilities. Libyans could stay in any hotel and could travel first class on public transport whenever they could afford it. A paternalistic and Arabophobe Frenchman, travelling in Libya in 1938, remarked that the Libyans were no less well cared for than Europeans. In Libya, at least, he remarked, he did not feel the need for a "thorough cleaning up" of the Arab population as he did in Tunisia.

[…]

The "little citizenship" amounted to a token reward to Moslem Libyans who had served in Ethiopia. The measure was also intended to create an elite favorable to the Italians. Qualified Libyans could now acquire certain rights and privileges – mainly that of joining Fascist organizations for Libyans – without losing their family and inheritance rights under Moslem law. Under the "little citizenship" Libyans could pursue a military career in Libyan units; serve as podesta (mayor) of an Arab community – but not a mixed one; serve in public office within the corporative system; and join the Associazione Musulmana del Littorio, the party organization for Libyans. But in return for this "special citizenship," a Libyan had to renounce his right to apply for metropolitan citizenship. Moreover, the "special citizenship" was valid only in Libya. This guaranteed that there would be no "immission of Arab elements into the peninsula," noted Padano."

Claudio G. Segre, Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life

These examples further solidify a clearly present racial consciousness within Italian Fascism, one that was concerned with European racial prestige, which was, however, still fair to its newfound racially lesser subjects, one that offered treatment that was appropriate for their racial status as is seen in the difference Balbo highlights between Libyans and negroes. The policy of "little citizenship" likewise showcases that there was no equal footing between ethnic Italians and natives of Italian colonies within Italy proper. The notion that a member of another race was equal to an Italian under Fascism in every way as part of a civic nationalist construction is a ludicrous fantasy of the *"classical Fascist"* crowd.

A few more notable aspects, that prove how Italian Fascism shares common roots with National Socialism in the same Worldview.

Fascists regarded their ascent to power as *"a revolution, which is at the same time a restoration,"* which sounds awfully familiar to the ideals of the German Conservative Revolutionaries, whose ideas were in a certain sense a prelude to National Socialism.

Italian Fascism too sought the establishment of the European Imperium, which they, according to Ustryalov, called the *"United Fascist States of Europe."*

Lastly, the final unification of Italy was sought not only in terms of overcoming a territorial and national divide, but also the historic divide: politicians of the liberal period had essentially limited the *"relevancy"* of Italian history to the era of Garibaldi and **Camillo**. Meanwhile, Fascism was actively restoring the unity of Italian history, threading together and connecting to modern history not

just antique Rome, but also Medieval Italy and Italy of the Renaissance, thus pointing to the value that blood and spirit *(or blood and Tradition, with the latter word understood in that Evola/Guenon sense of capital T Tradition)* carry on through the ages. To quote the poem with which Machiavelli had ended the Prince: *l'antico valore negli italici cuor non e ancor morto – For ancient valour is not dead in Italian hearts.*

THE FINAL HOURS

We've come to the conclusion of our article. It is our sincere hope, that this piece will indeed help our comrades recognize just how much respect **Mussolini** deserves, as he stands on equal footing with many other of our Champions. He may not have been Hitler, but he was still a magnificent beacon of our values, expressed through the concentrated lens of Italian national character. In his historic role **Mussolini** was of equal importance to the Italians as Hitler was to the Germans, though the latter will, of course, hold a higher place in terms of his position within our Worldview. He was the Machiavellian Prince, sent to finally complete the work of the Risorgimento and create the unified Italian, one that would elevate himself to a superior racial state, had Evola's racial doctrine been implemented. The tragedy of **Mussolini's** unfinished work is the same tragedy shared by all our Champions of that era.

To conclude his article, we'd like to tell the story of **Mussolini's** final hours, at least *one of the ways* this story is told, so we won't claim its historic accuracy, instead focusing on the dramatic nature of this particular retelling.

On the night of April 26-27th **Mussolini**, together with his mistress **Clara Petacci,** join 200 German soldiers who intend to cross the border. The column of trucks is stopped by a partisan blockade, its commander allows the column to continue on its way, under the condition that only Germans may pass. A German officer offers Mussolini to disguise himself by wearing the uniform of a Luftwaffe unteroffizier and hide among other German troops in one of the trucks. The partisans investigate the truck and, of course, one of them recognizes him.

He and Clara spend the night in a peasant house of the Dongo village, the news of Mussolini's arrest having already reached Allied command leads to a conflict between the secret services of Britain and USA over ownership of such an important prize. **Churchill** in particular is worried due to his former correspondences with Mussolini, and so hopes to get rid of him before he is questioned by anyone.

Colonel Audisio takes the initiative and transports Mussolini and Clara elsewhere under false pretense, telling them he was sent to secretly transport him to Switzerland. During the ride Mussolini was quiet, periodically falling asleep, his head slumping down till his chin would rest on his chest. Having spotted an appropriate place for the execution, Audisio asks the driver to stop

the car. He orders Mussolini out of the car who obeys without protest or resistance.

His walk is heavy, slightly dragging his right leg, the zipper on one of his boots had come undone. The irony of fate, that his life would end wearing a German uniform. Some minutes later Clara jumps out of the car and runs after him. When Mussolini stood at the spot he was ordered to stand on, she stood by his side, her courage shocking some of the partisans present.

The colonel, paying no mind to her, unfurls a piece of paper and reads out the order for Mussolini's execution. Yet Mussolini seemingly wasn't even listening, he stood solemnly with his head down, staring at some spot on the ground. Once the order has been read out in full Clara grabbed Mussolini around his shoulders, the partisans ordered her to get out of the way unless she wanted to die with him. She only grabbed him tighter.

He just stood there, slightly shivering in the cold, his lips blue, mumbling something unintelligible either to himself, the partisans, her, or perhaps God.

When the colonel pulled the trigger on the machine gun *nothing happened*. No shots followed. He cocks the machine gun and pulls the trigger again and… *still nothing.* Next he reached for his handgun and when he aimed it at Mussolini… *it too refused to fire*. A dark and chill inducing moment of mystical dread befalls the partisans. The colonel nervously orders a commissar to come over, who hurriedly rushes over and hands over his machine gun.

In that short pause, when the unarmed colonel stood next to Mussolini virtually one on one, there was enough time for a desperate attempt to flee and survive – a lake just behind them, mountains and forest all around. Instead the couple stood still, rooted to the spot.

Finally the sound of gunfire tears at the deafening silence of this uneasy moment, followed by a scream of a woman, while **Mussolini** fell to the ground without making a sound. The time of death is 4:10 p.m.

We will not go into the details of the barbarous treatment of the corpses of Mussolini and Clara Petacci. Mussolini's corpse would be, eventually, buried in unmarked grave in the Musocco cemetery. In 1946 a group of young Fascists led by **Domenico Leccisi** would discover and unearth the body, moving it from place to place, avoiding authorities of *"new Italy."* It would be 11 years before the body was finally put to rest in the family crypt of Mussolini's birth town Predappio, where it is to this day, the town itself being a small bastion of proud and open Fascist shops as well as a museum in

Mussolini's family home.

To the best of my knowledge Italian Fascists don't sing sad songs, at most they are bittersweet, celebrating that staple of Italian character that embraces extremes of life. Don't think of one's life having reached its end – think of the life they had lived.

Don't be sad because it's over, be happy because it happened.

MUSSOLINI: PRESENTE!

Eco’s 14 Points: A Refutation

Judas

(2021)

Fascism has had an equal fate in its external history. On the one hand the democracies, scandalized by authoritarianism, the end of liberty, statism, autarchy; on the other Bolshevism, which viewed Fascism as a bourgeois and capitalist regime, indeed as the most bourgeois and the most capitalistic of all regimes. And, just as internally liberals and communists have only anti-Fascism in common, so externally democracy and Bolshevism have found themselves united together only by anti-Fascism. But if Fascism were overthrown at the national and international levels, what would tomorrow be? The answer to this question is now becoming evident, because with the end of Fascism the only thing that could happen is a renewed clash between liberalism and communism, and therefore a new fatal Fascism...

They continue to deny that Fascism has succeeded in fulfilling the proposed task and insists on the necessity of pursuing the same aim in another way, and in a very different effective manner. Thus in Fascism they see not a synthesis but a misunderstanding of liberalism and socialism, a hybrid combination, that is, in which the needs of both are mortified, without any positive result. And thus, even if on the same plane as Fascism, they have begun to suggest here and there a recipe for a truer and more comprehensive synthesis, in which the best of the two opposing regimes is saved and its defects and limitations are denied. No longer Fascism, therefore, nor Corporatism, but any other name they can come up with to designate that political and social principle that Fascism supposedly would not have been able to implement....

Fascism knows its insufficiencies, the dangers that loom over it, the distance that still separates it from its proposed aim; it knows the forces that have often rendered its tasks difficult and ambiguous; it has known, above all, active and passive resistance, both internal and external, which has altered and exhausted it. All of this Fascism knows and confesses, but precisely because of this, it denies with all its strength that the objection can be pronounced by others who are not Fascists. Because Fascism is not an abstract ideology that can be judged on the level of abstractions, it is not a utopia that can aspire to the perfection of a formal logic; it is a political movement that is inserted and operates within a specific historical reality and cannot be separated from it. Thus the only ones authorized to object would be the participants of another political movement that is able to translate into reality the same ideal principle while avoiding the errors of Fascism.

Carlo Alberto Biggini - Truth and Lies about Fascism

INTRODUCTION

It is truly hilarious when someone believes they've nailed Fascism through the same, basic talking points we've been hearing about since Fascism was first conceived of: *"it's reactionary"*, *"it's capitalist"*, *"it's conservative"*, *"it's racist"*, *etc…*

Eco adds nothing new to the table beyond old accusations of an even cheaper quality, accusations that have little basis in anything but his imagination or that are outright libel to further his narrative against Fascism (as opposed to something more academic).

We must set a few things straight. First, **Umberto Eco is far away from being an academic on Fascism**. Not only that, but **he's also a self-described Anti-Fascis**t. If we were to take his word for granted, **it wouldn't be any different from asking an avowed Capitalist about the Definition of Communism or vice vers**a.... And finally, in order to expose the **blatant lies** of Eco, I will use Fascist Italy as a case study to expose *how little* his points apply to the Nation where Fascism originated.

Although this article was originally intended to be a response to an individual trying to define Fascism, it quickly developed into a fully articulated response to the 14 Points themselves. This text is not necessarily meant to be read from start to finish, rather, it can merely be used as a go-to resource (from which you can grab a point or two whenever you deal with somebody trying to appeal to Eco as an authority on Fascism). The beginning contains some responses to the author of the original post, but it's a brief section compared to the engagement in Eco's claims themselves.

As I always intend, this article is meant to be a resource for everybody to use. I don't want or need credit, since I write this with the same purpose I do my threads—just for people to know there are sources and ways to defend our claims.

Many drop Fascism because they can't find or are simply unable to get sources on the topic to fight against all the slander that is produced and published on Fascism. Nevertheless, with that in mind, I want to provide them with sources that will help them in their intellectual development. Without wasting more time, enjoy the article!

Most sources will be at the end attached to a drive containing them (*keep in mind, some are paraphrased from, whereas others are directly quoted from*).

Judas

BRIEFLY ADDRESSING THE ORIGINAL POST

Sourced from: ***http://aminoapps.com/p/5myulj***

Unlike what this user will try to make you believe, the term *Fasci* was initially employed as a way to describe syndicates in Italy, which were effectively illegal bodies outside of the state, which served to represent the interests of labour/the working class. In this respect, **the birth of Fascism came about through a sense of Syndicalism**. Furthermore, **the basis of Fascism did not even necessarily come about through Nationalism per se**, although it is nationally aware—that's for sure.

Of course the user is correct when it comes to their understanding of the *Fasces* (or the bundle of rods and an axe), nevertheless, **there is a difference between the Nation as conceived of by the Fascist and the Nation as conceived of by the Nationalist**, which was clearly explained by the main philosopher of the doctrine, Giovanni Gentile, in the following excerpt:

"The Fascist State, therefore, as distinct from the Nationalist State, is an entirely spiritual creation. It is a National State, because from the point of view of Fascism, it is the result of spiritual action rather than a presupposition. The Nation is never complete- nor is the State simply the Nation in its concrete political form. The State is always in fieri. it is all always in our hands. It is therefore our own immense responsibility. But this State that realizes itself in the consciousness and will of the individual, rather than being imposed from on high, cannot have the same relationship with the people imagined by Nationalism. They imagine that the State corresponded with the Nation, and conceived both as an already existing entity that it was not necessary to create, but which it was only necessary to come to know. That preexisting entity required a ruling class, characteristically intellectual, that sensed that entity, that first required to be known, understood, appraised, and exalted. The authority of the State was not a product, but a presupposition. It could not depend on the people, in fact, the fact people depended on the State. The authority that the people were required to recognize was the very precondition of life. Without that authority, sooner or later, one would have to acknowledge that survival was not possible. The Nationalist state was an aristocratic state, that constructed itself out of the force it inherited from its origin, that made it valued by the masses. The Fascist State, on the other hand, is a popular state, and in that sense, a democratic State per excellence. The relationship between the State and the individual is not that

between it and one or the other citizen, but with every citizen. Every citizen shares a relationship with the State that is so intimate that the State exists only in so far as it is made to exist by the citizen."

Giovanni Gentile - Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

In this sense, **the Italian Fascist state was, in and of itself, a state that looked for consent**. As has been documented by numerous historians (*Renzo De Felice, William Welk, Nicholas Farrell, etc...*), **Mussolini himself always looked for consent from the population**. Not only that, but **Fascism sought the approval of the public and the achievement of agreement/ establishment of consensus between opposing factions.**

This would be something that il Duce would point out in his last testament. By his own words, he was right, since many of the aforementioned scholars that have actually examined Fascist Italy have either implicitly or indirectly vindicated his claim that:

"When I am gone, I am sure that historians and psychologists will ask themselves how a single man was able to successfully lead a people like the Italian people. If I had accomplished nothing else, this single work of art would have been sufficient to prevent me from being forgotten. Others have been able to dominate with iron fists, not with consensus and agreement as I managed."

The Last Testament of Benito Mussolini

The user then proclaims that Hitler got inspired by Mussolini to create his own party. Whoever has read (or has any sort of knowledge on the history of National Socialism) will find this claim laughable.

Why?

Because **Hitler got the ideas for his doctrine through a multitude of sources**, including Johann Fichte with his ethical form of socialism, which was blended with the pursuit of a purely Germanic doctrine that would get inspired by several authors: from the former works of Rudolf Jung, an architect of National Socialism; to Anton Drexler, the founding member and leader of the DAP; and to Gottfried Feder, whose theories on monetary policy would be formative in the foundation of the NSDAP.

Hitler forms his views from a Germanic point of view. Hitler looked at Mussolini as a leader that had battled the effects of Jewry through an Italian Doctrine (as mentioned in Mein Kampf), nevertheless, **the essence of Mussolini's Doctrine was Italian and had yet to define its universal characteristics.**

"This helped to senselessly strengthen the attack against a system that we Germans should regard as the one ray of light in a corrupt world. (The ray of light is the Fascist Italian government of Mussolini even though it is not explicitly stated.) While the international-world Jew slowly but surely strangles us, our so-called patriots lash out against the man and the system that have dared to withdraw from the Jewish-Freemason embrace and to resist this spreading poison...

I openly admit that during this time, I developed the deepest admiration for the great man south of the Alps. His passionate love for his people did not permit him to make pacts with Italy's internal enemies, but he struggled in every way possible to destroy them. The reason why Mussolini will be ranked among the great men of this world is his determination not to share Italy with Marxism, but to save his Fatherland from Marxism by sentencing Internationalism to destruction. On the other hand, how pitiful and small our German pygmies of statesmen seem in comparison to such a great man. We must choke back disgust when these disrespectful, conceited zeros dare to criticize a man who is a thousand times greater."

Adolf Hitler - Mein Kampf

"A definitive characteristic of National Socialism was its rejection of foreign beliefs, customs and ideas within the German community. It holds that a nation consists of its blood and soil: an ethnically homogenous people and the land they cultivate, the domain that provides shelter, refuge and nourishment from the soil where their ancestors lie buried. Through self-development will a people realize their potential; through awareness of their intrinsic identity will generations fulfill the role nature and providence intended. The NSDAP held that every nation exhibits a collective personality. The influence of foreign peoples whose life experience, environment and ancestry formed them differently will debauch the nation and is hence immoral."

Richard Tedor - Hitler's Revolution

After this awesome display of knowledge, the user then exposes that Hirohito, Franco, and Pinochet were also figures of Fascism.

Japan, a regime that has been studied and yet, despite certain events such as the February 26th Incident, it remains to be seen as a non-Fascist State.

"The existence of 'Japanese Fascism' was detected by Soviet writers as early as 1934, and most Marxist commentators have

applied this interpretation to Japanese government and institutions of the 1930s ever since. A slightly different formulation has been made by other Japanese and Western social scientists, who point to the growing bellicosity and authoritarianism of the Japanese regime during those years and argue that Fascism is a valid label to define regimes that become aggressive and authoritarian during the industrialization of a non-state socialist system.

George M. Wilson has argued that the concept of "Japanese Fascism" is mistaken, insofar as no political movement arose to seize power and formal Japanese constitutional authority remained nominally intact, while a certain amount of political pluralism, together with parliamentary elections, continued to exist. Gregory J.Kasza, the keenest Western analyst of Japanese authoritarianism, has further expanded this critique.

He summarizes the arguments of those who reject the concept of a Japanese Fascism under five categories:

***1.** The concept is inadequately defined. **2.** It suffers from what one Japanese scholar called the deficiency theory: that is, the absence of a single party, a Duce or Führer, and so on. **3.** It has been applied indiscriminately, without differentiating between various groups and sectors. **4.** It has sometimes been motivated by political and/or wartime, rather than scholarly, concerns. **5.** It is particularly closely identified with Marxist interpretations of recent Japanese history."*

Stanley G. Payne - A History of Fascism 1914-1945

Francoist Spain, as studied by academics on Fascism such as Stanley G. Payne (Refer to *A History of Spanish Fascism*), can clearly be distinguished **not only as a non-Fascist but as an anti-Fascist regime that crushed the Fascist elements of the party and installed a traditionalist, catholic state**. As we get deeper into this text, we will explore why Traditionalism doesn't necessarily relate to Fascism.

"The entity that Franco elevated into partido único in April 1937 was not, however, integral Falangism but a union of Falangists, Carlists, and all other members of various rightist and other groups who were willing to join. Though the Falangist program—now the Twenty-six Points—was raised to official state doctrine, Franco specifically announced that this was to be understood merely as a point of departure and would be modified or elaborated depending upon future requirements. For the next decade and more the Franquist state was normally taken, outside Spain, to be a

"Fascist regime." It is doubtful, however, that one can speak of a Fascist regime unless it is dominated and constructed by generic or categorical Fascists, and this was hardly the case with Franquism. ***Core Falangists, the camisas viejas (lit., "old shirts"), played only a small role in the new state and held only a small minority of positions in the new system. They did not even control all of the administration of the new state party, the Falange Española Tradicionalista.*** *Addition of the last adjective, reflecting the nominal fusion with the Carlists, underscored the major right-wing limitations to the Fascism of the new regime.* ***That early Franquism contained a major component of Fascism is undeniable, but it was so restricted within a right-wing, praetorian, Catholic, and semipluralist structure that the category of "semiFascist" would probablybe more accurate.*** *Nonetheless, there was always strong antiFascist opinion among various rightist and Catholic sectors of the regime. As a result of this, but above all as a result of international events, the regime began to move in the opposite direction, starting as early as 1942…* ***When World War II ended, Spain was well into the process of transition from a partially mobilized, semiFascist state to a Catholic, corporative, and increasingly demobilized authoritarian regime."***

Stanley G. Payne - A History of Fascism 1914-1945

Furthermore, keep in mind that **several Falangists tried to kill Franco throughout the duration of his regime**, and not only that, but **in the later-stages of his life, he would be confronted for his acts against the Falange by Fascists.** He would also alter the works of Fascists and straight-up ban authors such as Ramiro Ledesma, who was (pretty much) the actual face of Spanish Fascism.

And, Pinochet was a mere authoritarian dictator that implemented free market capitalism and a conservative regime that banned parties and people trying to spread totalitarian ideologies. At best, with Pinochet, one sees a system that could be regarded analogous to the early stages of AustroFascism insofar as von Mises served as economic advisor to Dolfuss in the same capacity that Friedman advised Pinochet (via the Chicago boys).

As was the case in Austria, the economy of Chile experienced major setbacks as a consequence of libertarian economic policies and laissez-faire lending practices (especially in the banking sector) and, as a result, there were bankruptcies, bailouts, hyper-inflation, and mass-unemployment. The failures of the Chilean economy under neoliberalism have been noted by economists like Amartya Sen where the failures of the Austrian economy and the Credistalten Crisis of 1931 have been studied by countless scholars of the

Great Depression.

Eventually, Austria would remedy this problem by removing von Mises from his position in 1934, in the same way that Pinochet would kick out the Chicago Boys in 1984. It was from this point onwards that both economies began to experience considerable growth: Austria through corporatism and Chile through protectionism. That being said, **Chile could hardly be called Fascist to the same extent Austria was with its corporatist model.** Furthermore, one decisive move that was taken in Austria was to nationalize the bank in 1934, which happened around the same time von Mises left his position.

With all that being said, let us not waste much time on this man (with his low quality post) and let's move on to our favorite Anti-Fascist...

UR-FASCISM

Umberto Eco

1. The cult of tradition
2. The rejection of modernism
3. The cult of action for action's sake
4. Disagreement is treason.
5. Fear of difference
6. Appeal to social frustration
7. The obsession with a plot
8. The enemy is both strong and weak
9. Pacifism is trafficking with the enemy
10. Contempt for the weak
11. Everybody is educated to become a hero
12. Machismo and weaponry
13. Selective populism
14. Ur-Fascism speaks Newspeak

UR-Fascism by Umberto Eco, full, 9 page essay:
https://archive.org/details/eco_ur-Fascism/mode/2up

1
THE CULT OF TRADITION/TRADITIONALISM

"The old parties and the old men who carry on with the exploitation of the political Italy of tomorrow, as if nothing had happened, will be swept aside. The music of tomorrow will have another tempo. It will be an andantino sostenuto, and a hot fortissimo will not be ruled out. There will also be many a diesis in key. It is this prediction which makes us observe with a certain contempt everything that is said and done by the old windbags who govern us, so full of presumption, sacred formulas and senile imbecility.

These gray-haired people still desperately clinging to old patterns are pitiful. They are people who missed the train. The train passed and these people are still standing on the platform of the station with their grimaced and spiteful faces. The words republic, democracy, radicalism and liberalism no longer have any more meaning than the word socialism..."

Benito Mussolini – Trenchocracy

"The times in which we live no longer allow of a sedentary egoistical life; everything must be on the go, everybody must raise the standard of his activity, both in the offices and in the factories where the work is done—(Applause.)—and the Government, which I have the honour to represent, is the Government of speed, that is to say, we get rid of all that is stagnant in our national life.

Formerly the bureaucracy dozed over deferred decisions, to-day it must proceed with the maximum of rapidity. (Applause.) If we all go ahead with this energy, good-will and cheerfulness we shall surmount the crisis, which for that matter is already partly overcome.

I am pleased to see that Rome also is waking up and can offer us sights such as these works. I maintain that Rome can become an industrial centre. The Romans must be the first to disdain to live solely upon their memories. The Coliseum and the Forum are glories of the past, but we must build up the glories of to-day and of to-morrow. We belong to the generation of builders who, by work and discipline, with hands and brains, desire to reach the ultimate and longed-for goal, the greatness of the future nation, which will be a nation of producers and not of parasites."

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, January 19, 1923

"Sometimes you must break down and destroy in order to prepare the foundation for future building. Just as a builder can not

build if the ground is not paved and freed from stones and thorns, so Fascism could not build if it did not destroy the old mentality, the old cliques, and the old egoistic interests… For Fascism it is not a pride of passivity: you have to be worthy of that grandeur, not live upon it, and not use it as degenerate sons. Some say: 'We are great because we were great.' No! We will be great when the past becomes an impulse, a ferment of life."

A Diary of the Will

"We must ruthlessly eject the conservatives, the cowards, the fainthearted and the men of yesterday from our ranks and even from our lives."

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, October 27, 1930

This is perhaps the point that deserves the most laughter, and there are many who actually believe it outside of Eco! This is why I must exert myself in order to debunk it...

It is often understood that Fascism was, in of itself, a reaction: a mere movement trying to battle Communism because they were threatening Capitalism.

It is claimed Fascism was not a revolutionary force of its own, and that it wished to preserve the government of yesterday or, at least, built upon it and maintain some sort of order.

Although Fascism was not traditionalist, it did make an appeal to tradition to further the interests of the state, and as a result it could be seen as traditional. **In the same way it is national without necessarily being nationalist, it is traditional without being traditionalist.**

A number of academic works demonstrate why this belief is flawed.

Mussolini would oppose Communism for its internationalist beliefs, not because it had strikes or land occupations, and, funnily enough, **Mussolini approved land occupations and strikes insofar as they weren't carrying the Red Flag**. Not only that, but when it came to helping landowners, the landlords would give up their land voluntarily to the Fascists in exchange for protection from Communists. And what would the Fascist do with this land? **Give it to peasants!**

"Italy came closest to Socialist revolution in the late summer of 1920, though this would only become clear with hindsight. In June 1920 an army battalion had mutinied in Ancona after refusing to embark for Albania, which Italy had partly occupied since the war,

and workers in the city came out in force to support the mutineers. For a few days, until the army snuffed out the rebellion, it looked as if it might spread. But then at the beginning of September workers, especially in the major cities of the industrial north, began to occupy factories and in the countryside peasants took over farms. They locked out their employers and ran the factories and farms themselves. About 1 million workers were involved. ***Mussolini was in favour of the occupations, he wrote, so long as they did not become a Bolshevik experiment****…*

By April 1920 largely Socialist peasant leagues had seized 27,000 hectares of farmland from 191 landowners and handed over the land to 101 workers' co-operatives. The authorities did nothing to stop these seizures partly because of a law which decreed that war veteran peasants should be given leases on uncultivated agricultural land. ***Over every town and city hall controlled by the Socialists flew not the Italian tricolour but the red flag of revolution.*** *In 1920 strikes and arson caused the loss of one-third of the hay crop, one-fifth of the grain crop and one-quarter of the grape harvest. In the province of Ferrara alone there were 192 arson attacks on farmland in 1920 and the prefect wrote that 'columns of hundreds of leaguists had committed serious crimes against people and property'.*

It was to break free of this tyranny that rural Fascism began. Rural Fascism turned Fascism into a force of national importance virtually overnight. Its explosive growth and violence would change Fascism for ever. In January 1921 Mussolini stated his position on the agricultural issue in Il Popolo d'Italia. 'Faced with the agrarian problem the position of Fascism is ten-dentially this: land to him who works it and makes it yield. No "socialisation of the land", a meaningless phrase and — above all — no agricultural state.' ***In return for squadrista support against Socialists, the Fascists persuaded the landowners to hand over large areas of land to the peasants on long leases — especially in Emilia Romagna. Fascist agrarian policy aimed to replace wage labour whenever possible with leases or ownership of small plots. The Fascist agrarian programme published in June 1921 stated that 'land should belong to him who works it'.``***

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact that Fascism aligned itself with right-wing Traditionalists becomes less significant when you consider that **it also had left-wing Futurists as one of its main wings when it first started**. Futurists were known for being extremely **anti-**

Traditionalist, and demanded a full advance towards the future with no attachments to the past. Futurists would, of course, be disappointed due to the concessions that Mussolini would entertain, but so would right-wing Traditionalists once they realized that Fascism had its own plans...

"Fascism was prepared to involve the state in complex economic activities if that intervention was conceived necessary to further one or another primary ideological commitment. Under those circumstances, as time passed, it became more and more difficult to distinguish purely economic matters from those that were political and the proper function of a presumptively Manchestrian administration.

As a consequence, during the first years of the regime, conservatives and revolutionaries, both within and outside the Fascist party, jockeyed for positions and advantage. Under the circumstances, Fascist theoreticians often papered over tensions by maintaining that the revolution was disposed to "conserving" whatever was of value from the past. That seemed to satisfy the class of "fellow travelers" who imagined that Fascism would serve their conservative or liberal interests. *They chose to understand Fascism as a transitional regime, destined to restore the antecedent economically and politically liberal order.*

With the murder of Matteotti in June 1924, ***those conservatives and liberals who had collected around Fascism prior to the March on Rome began to fall away.*** *At the same time, there was a sudden erosion of equity values. Apprehension grew among the propertied classes—many withdrew their support—and the opposition press arrayed itself against the government. There were large-scale defections—particularly among the business and financial communities—together with a substantial number from the Fascist syndicates. To add to the mounting difficulties, the formal political opposition "seceded" from parliament in moral outrage—and sought to mobilize the public as well as the Crown against the government. The entire system was threatened."*

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

Julius Evola is a perfect example of the right turning against Fascism. Here was a figure that many (such as Eco) deem as one of the most important Fascists thinkers, yet upon a closer inspection, not only was the Fascist government suspicious of him, but also, the disagreements between Fascism and Evolian Traditionalism would be displayed even during the existence of the Italian Fascist Regime.

For Evola, Fascism was useful to Traditionalism **(and not the other way around)**, in other words, **Evola did not see any value in the doctrine of Fascism itself and only saw it as a tool to advance his own agenda.**

"Fascism, for Evola, as it had manifested itself in Mussolini's revolution, was a material thing, without a soul. It was a revolution that had mobilized to its standards some of the dregs of society. It had been 'born of compromise, fed on rhetoric and the petty ambitions of petty people. The state system it fabricated [was] uncertain, ill-conceived, violent, unfree, and subject to equivocations.' What Fascism needed was a soul—to be governed not by leaders chosen by chance or popular appeal, but by those animated by the 'true Wisdom' of 'cosmic Masters.' Only in those circumstances would people spontaneously sort themselves into castes—as they had in the antiquity of China, Persia, and Egypt—to thereby provide structure for a 'true state.' A caste arrangement would provide 'unconditional freedom' for those infused with cosmic wisdom and unlimited power—thereby to capture the "rational essence" of true liberalism…

He condemned the 'socialistoid' and 'demogogic' character of Fascist corporativism. The only way Fascism could hope for deliverance was to be infilled with the 'calm illumination' of that true 'Wisdom' arising out of Mediterranean 'hermetic and pythagorean silence'—finding confirmation of its 'Truth' through 'acts of power,' resonating with 'vibrations in the blood,' rather than via the provision of pallid 'arguments and the writing of books.' Only if Fascism succeeded in finding its 'light' in the Bhagavad-gita might it be made truly revolutionary—to restore the 'traditional order of things' to a decadent modern world.

In all of this, little of Mussolini's Fascism, other than some of its vocabulary, escaped unscathed. Almost four decades later, Evola was to repeat the same roster of objections—and convey his conviction that Mussolini had never been sufficiently "spiritual" to understand any of it. In effect, for the youthful ***Evola, Fascism, as it was, had precious few immediate and evident virtues. Early in 1925, his intention had been to convey all that by undertaking efforts that were expressly anti-Fascist. He soon reconciled himself to Fascism, however, apparently in order to employ it as a vehicle to bring to its elite the 'traditional wisdom' of his 'invisible Masters'****— in order that they might assist him in mounting a revolution against the anti-traditional decadence of the postmedieval modern world...*

Evola was never a Fascist, however the term is understood. He provided idiosyncratic meaning for all its principal concepts in his candid effort to further the interests of that arcane Tantric and Vedic Wisdom that he had made his own. ***With respect to Fascism, he advocated a total rejection of any notion of a 'totalitarian state' that rested on a nationalism that required obedience and commitment. Terms that had become familiar to Fascists, such as 'hierarchy,' 'leadership,' 'elitism,' the 'state,' 'imperialism,' and 'myth' all had their meanings transmogrified in the lexicon of Evola's traditional Mediterranean vision****...*

Evola clearly held Mussolini and Fascism to have been nothing other than a 'hypnotic' side show that might be conveniently employed as a means of communicating the profound realities of a transcendent world to those capable of understanding. It seems clear that throughout his life, Evola sought to use Fascism's instrumentalities to educate a truly "spiritual" elite who would undertake the restoration of the "Traditional" virtues of the ancient world...

Evola sought to create a movement that would labor for neither Fascism nor National Socialism—but for a 'truly Traditional Right.' That was the political movement that survived the war. It had precious little to do with Fascism. *For the history of Fascist doctrine, it is of some significance that virtually all the intellectuals with whom Evola associated explicitly opposed Giovanni Gentile, both as a political figure and as the 'philosopher of Fascism.' As anti-Gentileans, Evola and those with whom he most readily identified rejected the humanism of Gentile's Actualism, as well as its moral opposition to anti-Semitism and biological racism."*

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

The fact that Mr. Eco is an exponent of the idea that "Traditionalist" thinkers were to be found among Fascist thought is quite ironic, since **Fascism found itself amongst: radical anti-traditionalists, revolutionary syndicalists, and former socialists**; and was mainly guided by a strictly revolutionary left wing line of philosophers be it: Sergio P'anunzio, Ugo Spirito, Alfredo Rocco, Nicola Bombacci, etc…

Not only was that the case, but **Mussolini would also engage in a gradual process of reformation within Fascist Italy that was meant to purge the Traditionalist elements of the regime and achieve his Ethical Totalitarian State through a Social Republic.**

Fascist Italy can be divided into three periods: Heroic Capitalism (1922-1932), Corporate State (1932-1943) and State Socialism (1943-

1945).

"Recently, however, there has been some suggestion of change. In the immediate past, Otto-Ernst Schueddekopf identified Italian Fascism as a 'dictatorship for development.' Earlier still, Mary Matossian characterized Mussolini's Fascism as animated by an 'ideology of delayed industrialization,' a belief system calculated to husband the population of Italy from the stage of first industrialization to its conclusion. If, in fact, Fascism was a developmental regime, and its ideology a developmental belief system, could it not be accommodated in our preliminary schematization without theoretical tension?...

Certainly the aristocratic elements of the traditional society persisted into the Fascist period, and they were notably absent in the Bolshevik case. But their presence or absence might well constitute nothing more than an historic irrelevance in terms of Fascism's general developmental program. The Fascists, as distinct from the Bolsheviks, found themselves in a political environment in which many elements of the pre-Fascist polity (including the aristocracy) still enjoyed considerable political power. There is little to suggest that Fascism could have embarked upon its developmental program, much less acceded to power, without making accommodations for those still vital elements. It is clear that Fascism, prior to the March on Rome, recognized the need of nonmovement allies. With equal clarity Fascists understood that a protracted class war could only impede their program, just as it had impeded the Bolshevik program. The difference was that the Fascists understood their historic charge-the rapid modernization and industrialization of a retarded socioeconomic system-while the Bolsheviks were still hobbled by the commitment to an inappropriate form of Marxism designed for revolution in a postindustrial environment.

A better case, it would seem, could be made for Italian Fascism as a developmental system-supported by an ideology rooted in classical Marxism, but adapted to the demands of contemporary development. When Fascists spoke of 'economic expansion,' the 'need to industrialize,' 'accumulate capital,' 'rationalize the means of production,' introduce 'technological innovation' to increase per capita production, expand the "managerial functions" of the state, modify traditional attitudes toward organization, and integrate labor under the 'unitary discipline of the state corporations,' they were clearly speaking the language of developmental politics."

A.James Gregor - Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship

It has often been argued that the last part of Mussolini's

regime was a mere faux-appeal to the proletariat and a way to larp as a Socialist, however, this was disproved by former Italian Fascists like Rutilio Sermonti and it was disproved by academics like A. James Gregor in works such as Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship. From these primary and secondary sources, we can see that Italy was engaging in a series of reforms that were directed towards State Socialism. This can be also tracked throughout Mussolini's speeches as well.

Mussolini saw Traditions as an instrument of the State that could be used to attract significant individuals and major voting blocs that could guarantee power for Fascism. His concessions towards reactionary forces in his regime earned him the 1943 Coup that gave away for the Italian Civil War. This would be recognized by Mussolini as one of his main mistakes, since, although he was on a path of reformation, he never truly achieved his Totalitarian State and had to rush the process during the Italian Social Republic, in which he was still subjugated by the Germans…

"He (Mussolini) announced that he intended to found the 'anti-party', that is the combat beams, an organ of action and agitation for the whole peninsula, destined to turn against both right-wing misoneism and the destructive ambitions of the Leninist left."

Gioacchino Volpe – Genesis of Fascism

The concept of conserving the past was rejected by Mussolini; most of his policies sought to establish power for Fascism alone. And not only that, **he would consistently declare his opposition to the concept of Right and Left Wing**, since he saw Fascism as a pragmatic government destined to rule at its own pace with its own goals (a Third Position, or as he would say, "on the Top of the Centre)

*"Fascism, which sits on the Right—although in fact we could be placed at the **top of the Centre**—is reactionary towards Socialism, which, even if it sits on the Left, is today typically bourgeois, one might even say conservative and reactionary…*

These words (R & L) do not have a fixed and immutable meaning: they have variables and are conditioned by the circumstances of time, place and spirit. We Fascists completely ignore these empty terms and above all despise those who are terrified by these words."

Benito Mussolini – Clichés; Left and Right

"My formula of 1925 is the same as today: all power to

Fascism and exclusively to Fascism! The Revolution, which spared its enemies in 1922, today lines them up quietly against the wall, and will do likewise tomorrow. Today, therefore, it is stronger. How many of our enemies claim that there is no real revolution until the firing squads can take note of it. The Revolution that was unitary since the Congress of Rome of 1921, has remained such and will remain such: that is its incomparable strength. Jacobins, Girondins, Thermidorians, ***Right and Left, are unknown terminologies in the Fascist Regime****"*

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, October 27, 1930

"Mussolini did not seize power. That was the Fascist version of history. He was given power by the King. Nor was Fascism a bourgeois counterrevolution against the working class. That was the Marxist version of history. The Fascists opposed the bourgeoisie as much as they opposed the Socialists because both exalted one class at the expense of the other. The Fascists exalted the nation, united not divided.

The popular definition of Fascism as right-wing is misleading even though Mussolini in 1922 described it as 'of the right'. The intellectual driving force behind it was left-wing. Most Fascists had either been Socialists or syndicalists. However right-wing the manifestations of Fascism became, its guiding star was always left. Its opposition to Socialism might be described as right-wing, it's republican tendencies leftwing. Its opposition to the principle of parliamentary democracy might be described as right-wing, its opposition to the undemocratic reality of the Italian parliament left-wing. Its defense of private property was right-wing but its support for the big state to bridle Capitalism — its Corporate State— left-wing…

It was the Fascists who made popular the phrase Third Way between the first and second ways, Capitalism and Socialism, to describe their Corporate State which would ensure class collaboration and end class war. Mussolini would write, "The force of Fascism consists of this: that it takes from all programmes the vital part and has the force to put them into practice."

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

2
REJECTION OF MODERNISM

"The Doctrine of Fascism understands human life as a struggle in the name of principles of a superior ethic, through which it affirms the prominent spiritual motives; the value of culture in all its forms, religious, artistic, scientific, the importance of education and labor, the preeminence of all moral forces and a responsible spirit."

National Fascist Party - Dictionary of Politics

*"**Fascism, by and large, was modernist.** The Futurists, who exalted speed and the machine, had helped create and sustain it. Its core support came not just from the piccolo borghese but from the dispossessed and its core ideas came from the avant-garde. **Fascism attracted and allowed all sorts of avanguardisti**. Mario Sironi, scandalously not reckoned so but unquestionably among the great painters and sculptors of the twentieth century, and also the political cartoonist of Il Popolo d'Italia, was an ardent Fascist. He wanted to create a modern art which was a synthesis of the classical and the modern — just what Fascism wanted to do with the Italians."*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

Having the author recognize the fact that Fascism did embrace a certain degree of Modernism saves us a good chunk of work—nevertheless, he does say that it was merely a rejection of the enlightenment in order to return to a former way of thinking (in order to bypass the Enlightenment). **That being said, everything for a Fascist (a movement that wanted a "new Fascist future", as explained before) was about returning to a certain mentality.**

As obvious as this should be, the fact of the matter is that **Fascism wanted to create its own Enlightenment and impose its own Modernity—removing the inherently damaging consequences of liberal materialism that had separated the spirit of people from the masses.** It sought to shape material circumstances to its advantage by way of imposing a Fascist rationale upon economic processes.

Despite the fact that Fascism cheered spiritual progress wherever it could be seen in the national tradition (such as in the works of the poet Dante Alighieri or in the scientific spirit of Giordano Bruno), **it also embodied a modernist spirit that sought to free man from medieval culture.**

This is the main issue with the interpretation of Umberto Eco is

that he disregards the fact that Fascism, although opposed to modernity in the liberal sense, didn't seek the complete destruction of it. Fascism was prepared to adopt modernism insofar as it remained spiritually revolutionary and fulfilling in the brand new society of il Libro e moschetto.

"This political culture, communal, anti-individualistic, and anti-rationalistic, represented at first a rejection of the heritage of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and later the creation of a comprehensive alternative, an intellectual, moral, and political framework that alone could ensure the perpetuity of a human collectivity in which all strata and all classes of society would be perfectly integrated… Fascism wished to rectify the most disastrous consequences of the modernization of the European continent and to provide a solution to the atomization of society, its fragmentation into antagonistic groups, and the alienation of the individual in a free market economy. Fascism rebelled against the dehumanization that modernization had introduced into human relationships, but it was also very eager to retain the benefits of progress and never advocated a return to a hypothetical golden age. Fascism rebelled against modernity in as much as modernity was identified with the rationalism, optimism, and humanism of the eighteenth century, ***but it was not a reactionary or an antirevolutionary movement in the Maurrassian sense of the term. Fascism presented itself as a revolution of another kind, a revolution that sought to destroy the existing political order and to uproot its theoretical and moral foundations but that at the same time wished to preserve all the achievements of modern technology.*** *It was to take place within the framework of the industrial society, fully exploiting the power that was in it."*

The Birth of Fascist Ideology - Zeev Sternhell

In the Fascist conception, depravity doesn't begin with modernity, and the deprivation of modernity is seen as a corruption of an already corrupted world—not really freeing the medieval mindset of its chains, but attaching it to new ones. **Thus, the supposed "return to Tradition" that is applied to the Fascism is bogus.** Once again, we delve into the organic quality of Fascism, and that is, regardless of this association between Traditionalism and Fascism, **every single policy is determined by the utility it has for the State and whether it achieves the Socialist Nationalism it seeks to establish** (In the Fichtean sense of Socialism).

To a degree, **we could rightfully call Fascism a form of rule-based utilitarianism, wherein results are measured**

according to the extent to which they increase the power of the state. In order to understand this, we must know certain aspects of the Fascist Lexicon.

"We think that the State is the same personality of the individual, stripped of accidental differences, removed from the abstract concern of particular interests, not seen and not evaluated in the general system in which their reality and the possibility of their effective guarantee are; personality brought back and concentrated in their deepest consciousness: where the individual feels the general interest as his own, and therefore wants it as a general will. This profound awareness that each of us realizes and must realize within ourselves as a national consciousness in its dynamism, with its juridical form, in its political activity, this very basis of our individuality, this is the State. And to conceive it outside the moral life is to deprive the individual himself of the substance of his morality. The ethical state of the Fascist is no longer - of course - the agnostic state of old liberalism. Its ethics is spirituality: personality, which is awareness; system, which is will. And system means thought, program. It means the story of a people gathered in the living fire of a current and active conscience. It means the concept of what one is, what one can and must be: it means mission and purpose, in general and in particular, remote and close, mediated and immediate, all determined. The state is the great will of the nation; and therefore great intelligence. Nothing ignores; and he does not consider himself extraneous to anything that touches the citizen's interest, which is his interest: neither economically nor morally. Nihil humani a se alienum putat. The state is neither a grand facade nor an empty building: it is man himself; the house built, inhabited, and enlivened by the joy and pain of work and the whole life of the human spirit."

Giovanni Gentile - What is Fascism?

The above passage touches upon the eternal spirit that Fascism displayed. It places a high value in developmentalism, progressivism, and constant change based on a reciprocity of social and political factors. The duty of the people is to build each other up and place value in their own spiritual enlightenment—it is not some half-baked dream of materialism from the history of ideas.

Fascism opposed the ideas explored in earlier times out of a pragmatic and idealist approach to the world, hence it's determination to build up its own rationale and its own proper-spiritual thinking in its citizens, which is different from what could be

called "over-intellectualism", i.e. **being a dilettante** or a *"leterato"* (those who embody what would be called static thought (or *"pensiero pensato"*) in Actual Idealist terms).

(For a greater overview of Fascism and Modernism, please refer to Roger Griffin's book on the matter...)

3
CULT OF ACTION FOR ACTION'S SAKE: IRRATIONALISM

"Anti-Intellectualism does not mean, as some ignorant Fascists seem to believe, that they are authorized by the Duce to dismiss science and philosophy. It does not mean that one denies the value of thought and those superior expressions of culture through which thought expresses itself. Spiritual reality is a synthesis, in whose unity one finds expression and value in that thought that is action. In the conclusive unity of that synthesis converge, and must converge, and know that they converge, many elements without which the synthesis would be empty, operating in a void"

Giovanni Gentile - Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

"Fascism is war on Intellectualism. The Fascist spirit is will, not intellect; and I hope I will not be misunderstood. ***Fascist intellectuals must not be intellectuals. Fascism is and should be an enemy without truce or pity, not against intelligence, but against intellectualism which is a disease of intelligence.*** *For intelligence too is will, and Fascism at least feels this, disdaining the culture that is an ornament or adornment of the brain and longing for a culture by which the spirit is armed and fortified for winning ever new battles. And this may be, this should be our barbarity, a barbarity moreover of intellectuals! Against science and above all against philosophy; but,* ***of course, against the science and philosophy of decadents, of the spineless, of those who always stand at the window and are satisfied to criticize as if it were no affair of theirs!****"*

Giovanni Gentile

"Still, Fascism is not a religion or philosophy in the usual sense. This is the second point: Fascism is an attitude toward action. It keeps life whole and treats it as a unity. It responds to circumstances, without tying the future up in great knots of long-term planning. ***Though Fascism is anti-intellectual, it does not neglect science and philosophical rigor. Spirituality pulls together all pieces of life in thoughts that become actions. Fascism opposes a theoretical stance toward life. People who refuse to get involved in solving everyday problems are just bad citizens. They will be driven out.*** *Fascism opposes that cultural decadence that robs*

citizens of commitment to the trials the nation faces. Decadence makes of citizens mere spectators. That is what intellectualism does. One sees the up and down, the good and bad, in everything, and takes a passive stance. Hence, Fascism spends little time theorizing. It is busy doing things. Theory is a wan ally in reform. Fascism's mantra is life, not system or idea. So, some call Fascism a method rather than a theory."

Summary of Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

"Intellectualism", as Fascism understands it, is the prevention of the synthesis between Thought and Action. It represents thoughtless action and actionless thought—never allowing for the dialectic to complete itself into a definitive synthesis. This largely consists of **armchair intellectualism and contrarianism**, as **those who purely engage in thought will never embody what they think and they will never push for establishing it in real life.**

The silly idea **that Fascists were all about blood and violence has been nothing but slander** by the usual dogmatic materialists, who deny the truth of any Third Position that doesn't go along with their wacky philosophical standpoint—thus we see armchair intellectuals: claiming to understand the "irrational" nature of Fascism while ignoring the amount of intellectuals behind the movement itself, figures such as: Giovanni Gentile (a personality that would inspire a generation of philosophers), Alfredo Rocco, Sergio Panunzio, Ugo Spirito, and Nicola Bombacci.

Let me tell you this, **none of them had sympathy for traditionalism, let alone cried about returning to the past**, figures such as: Sergio Panunzio, who saw Fascism as the highest realization of Marxism; Nicola Bombacci, who believed that the actions of Mussolini were in line with the Marxist-Leninist dialectic. Bombacci would aid Fascist thought by bringing mainstream Communists into the fold, individuals such as Giovanni Bitelli, Federico Giannini, Dino Fiorelli, Mario Guarnieri, Bruno Ricci, Sigfrido Barghini and Alibrando Giovannetti. Oh, and let us not forget how Giovanni Gentile, the main philosopher of Fascism, believed that—**not only did Fascist doctrine achieve the only feasible form of Socialism—but Fascist Philosophy had become a form of Practical Marxism**. Surely this was a Traditionalist ideology that complained of the loss of Traditional Values! **Fascism would seek constant change in Italian Society, rejecting any ties to the past and embracing whatever change may happen due to the dynamic nature of humans.**

As we can see, it's not even that hard to grasp the Fascist understanding of "intellectualism". What it amounted to was simply a rejection of remaining in your chair and not putting the money where your mouth is. Fascism as a whole adhered to the motto that: *"the Book and the Rifle makes the Perfect Fascist"*. For a reason, being a brute is not enough and neither is being a wimp. And what happens when you mix both? You get the ideal that Fascism aims for, a mixture of Thought and Action, which is why Italy had as one of its main legislative priorities: Education reform and programs to improve the health of Italians (mainly through encouraging athleticism)..

"The ethical state was to be realized not only by promulgating new laws or by creating new institutions but above all by fostering a new spirit. To accomplish this goal, Fascism had to make use of all the agencies of the state, most especially the schools. Fascism was not a dogma but a "continuing revolution of the spirit of the nation," and education had a crucial role to play in that revolution.

The application of Gentilian notions to education consisted first of all in a rejection of the prevailing positivist trends in Italian pedagogy that emphasized the need for a lay school (an "agnostic" school, according to Gentile) and the development of scientific instruction…"

Tracy H. Koon - Believe, Obey, Fight:
Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943

"Is Fascism therefore 'anti-intellectual,' as has been so often charged? It is eminently anti-intellectual, eminently Mazzinian, that is, if by intellectualism we mean the divorce of thought from action, of knowledge from life, of brain from heart, of theory from practice. Fascism is hostile to all Utopian systems which are destined never to face the test of reality. It is hostile to all science and all philosophy which remain matters of mere fancy or intelligence. It is not that Fascism denies value to culture, to the higher intellectual pursuits by which thought is invigorated as a source of action.

Fascist anti-intellectualism holds in scorn a product peculiarly typical of the educated classes in Italy: the leterato—the man who plays with knowledge and with thought without any sense of responsibility for the practical world. It is hostile not so much to culture as to bad culture, the culture which does not educate, which does not make men, but rather creates pedants and aesthetes, egotists in a word, men morally and politically indifferent. It has no use, for instance, for the man who is 'above the conflict' when his country or its important interests are at stake.

By virtue of its repugnance for 'intellectualism,' Fascism prefers

not to waste time constructing abstract theories about itself. But when we say that it is not a system or a doctrine we must not conclude that it is a blind praxis or a purely instinctive method. If by system or philosophy we mean a living thought, a principle of universal character daily revealing its inner fertility and significance, then Fascism is a perfect system, with a solidly established foundation and with a rigorous logic in its development; and all who feel the truth and the vitality of the principle work day by day for its development, now doing, now undoing, now going forward, now retracing their steps, according as the things they do prove to be in harmony with the principle or to deviate from it."

Giovanni Gentile - The Philosophic Basis of Fascism

4
DISAGREEMENT IS TREASON

"How must we deal with non-Fascists? There are citizens who are not members of the party, but are honest, disciplined workers. They must be respected. There are others who seek to damage Fascism: these must be mercilessly combated."

A Diary of the Will

"Il Secolo, a leading anti-Fascist daily, for example, noted on 4 November, 'There isn't a party or political movement in Italy in which there are, as in Fascism, so many currents which flow in opposite directions, each one acting for itself, with no respect either for discipline, or central leadership.' "

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

As explained before, c**riticism was actually something Mussolini enjoyed and even sought out in order to achieve consent from the population.** The idea that Fascism was merely a totalizing idea with little to no disagreement on the interpretations of it is ridiculous—**there were a number of dissenting individuals that would disagree with one another within the regime.** Not only is that the case, but **Mussolini would go on to include several critics of his government among his circle.** On this topic, we could also go over the different branches that separated within the Fascist Party, which was ultimately in opposition to the path of action that each individual wanted, be it: Gentile, Ugo Spirito, Marinetti, Alfredo Rocco, Sergio Panunzio, Niccolo Giani, Berto Ricci, De Vecchi, etc… **The diversity of thought within the Fascist Regime is surprisingly wide, since the Fascist Party encompassed a variety of thinkers with different leanings.**

The idea that Fascism merely engaged in violence out of mere call to action and emerged as a blood-thirsty death cult is also flawed, **since it was not Fascists that started violence across Italy.** The Red Terror was already in place before the appearance of the Squadrismo that characterized Italian Fascism. As Mussolini would say in 1921:

"For Fascists, violence is not a caprice... It is not art for art's sake. It is understood to be a surgical necessity. A doleful necessity... For us, violence is an exception, not a method, or a system."

The regime, as exposed by OVRA archives and several

historians, was (sadly for the slanderers of Fascism), barely oppressive with opposing currents to Fascism.

"It was the OVRA which provided the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State with most of its work. Between 1927 and 1929, 5046 people came before the tribunal of whom one-fifth were convicted. It sentenced one to death, six to twenty-five-thirty years in prison, forty-two to fifteen-twentyfive years, 370 to five-fifteen years. But this was all very small indeed compared with the appalling atrocities inflicted on their citizenry by other dictatorships whether of the right or the left…

Like Communism, Fascism regarded violence as morally justifiable in certain circumstances other than in self-defence or as capital punishment. Engels had called violence a purifying force and Sorel, the Marxist revisionist and revolutionary syndicalist whose influence on Mussolini had been profound, had said that correctly used violence was moral and creative. The Futurists, whose ideas permeated Fascism, had exalted 'aggression...the slap and the fist' in their original manifesto of 1909 and described war as 'the only hygiene in the world'. But once Fascism was in power, a Fascist terror was unnecessary.

By 1930 squadrismo had virtually disappeared. Between 1930 and 1934, the OVRA, the secret political police, arrested 6000 political opponents, mostly Communists or members of Giustizia e Liberta, the non-party revolutionary movement which aimed to stir up armed insurrection against Fascism founded by Carlo Rosselli in October 1929 — an average of 125 a month. But few of those arrested went to prison. During the 1930s the Special Tribunal imprisoned no more than several dozen political prisoners a year, though the numbers increased in the second half of the decade — 310 in 1938 and 365 in 1939. Three people in all were executed during the 1930s for plotting to assassinate Mussolini."

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact of the matter is that Fascism ruled for 20 years across Italy seeking agreement despite being composed of a wide range of beliefs. It wasn't merely a madman crushing opposition left to right, but a man getting rid of subversive elements, only to be left with what may contribute to the development of Fascist Doctrine. **If anything we could call Fascism an achievement of a Permanent Revolution, not in the sense of Trotsky, but in the sense of constant change and improvement.**

"*Italian Fascism proposed the theory of Permanent Revolution,*

which it pretended to carry out as an ideological model in a gradual way. In the history of revolutionary movements, Fascism was the one that declared that it was impossible to pre-emptively adopt an institutional entity that was stable—be it monarchy or republic. On the contrary, the ideological basis of the Corporative Ethical State can't be identified with an institution or a certain historic moment. For Fascism, these were just a means to an end. Therefore, if an institution becomes anachronistic, it should be substituted with another one. Mussolini said in 1917: 'Revolution is not chaos, disorder or collapse of activities like the stupid extremists say. Revolution is an order that replaces another order, a hierarchy that takes the place of another'. Mussolini did not have as an objective a monarchic Fascism, since, sooner or later, one of the two would prevail. The relations were hostile, in the same way they were with the Left and Right."

Marco Piraino & Stefano Fiorito - Fascist Identity

Fascism is not a doctrine that seeks to stagnate into one single dogma, on the contrary, **it aimed to get rid of dogmas and pursued discussion across different points of view, as the regime had a wide variety of thinkers that would oftentimes disagree with one another.** This is why Mussolini had to adopt a role of consensus-building, which, for better or for worse, led to his downfall in 1943. After this, he would realize that, despite his softness with certain elements, he was stabbed in the back by the sword of Damocles.

"All dictators have always made slaughter of their enemies. I have been the only mild one: a few hundred dead against several thousand. I believe I've ennobled dictatorship. Perhaps I emasculated it, but I rid it of instruments of torture. Stalin sits on a mountain of human bones. Is this bad? I don't regret to have done all the good I've done, even to my adversaries, even enemies who plotted against my life. I've done this through the provision of subsidies that were so frequent as to become stipends, as well as by saving their lives. But if tomorrow they will kill my men, what responsibility will I have for having spared them?"

Last Testament of Benito Mussolini

5
FASCISM IS RACIST BY DEFINITION

This is where the issue gets tricky. Many depend on Mussolini saying, *"Race! It is a feeling, not a reality: ninety-five percent, at least, is a feeling. ... National pride has no need of the delirium of race."*

To those who say this: I must warn those who believe in the aforementioned quote that this is a reduction of Mussolini's views on Race, and as far as the evience for this goes, I can refer to his 1919 Article called "The Accomplices" or his 1934 "Is the White Race Dying?".

The matter can be definitely settled when one refers to a collection of the statements he made to the importance of Race throughout his regime, as collected by Arturo Sabatini called "The Concept of Race in Fascism". **The issue comes into play when one believes that the racial views of Mussolini were backed by Doctrine.** If we look deeper, his constant contradiction and lack of racial policies up until the influence of National Socialism indicate that **Fascism's Racialism was not political and lacked existence in the doctrine.** If anything, it would be different from an understanding of Race in the modern day. The reality is that **Fascism lacked much concern for Race as a whole, up until its political inclusion later on in the regime (due to German influence).**

The Political Racialism of Fascism would be criticized by important figures, such as Giovanni Gentile and many of the Actualists within the regime. People such as Italo Balbo (possible successor of Mussolini) would take harsh opposition against it, and institutions such as the CAUR (Comitati d'Azione per l'Universalita di Roma) would always take a harsh stance against any sort of racial understanding of Fascism, preaching its universality instead. Throughout the Mountreux Congresses, which could be deemed as a "Fascist Internationale", a series of discussions on racial topics and anti-semitism would take place, all of them taking a critical stance torwards Racism and German National Socialism. One of the main reasons as to why these congresses would fail would be due to the constant infighting among its members.

We could also take a closer inspection of the notes that other Fascist authors would write on Anti-Semitism and the Racial views of Italy, which, pretty much summarize a point I want to make in order to laugh at this awful claim.

"'But Mussolini is not anti-Semitic. You rejoice in vain,'

whispered the Jewish press into our ears. It is not a matter of what we rejoice in say I, it is a question of why you Jews are sad at his victory, if he is not anti-Semitic. What is the rationale of the worldwide attack on him by the Jewish press? Italy has as many Jews as Romania has Csángós *[a quite minor ethnic group] in the Siret valley. An Italian anti-Semitic movement would be as if Romanians started a movement against the* Csángós. *But had Mussolini lived in Romania he could not but be anti-Semitic, for Fascism means first of all defending your nation against the dangers that threaten it. It means the destruction of these dangers and the opening of a free way to life and glory for your nation."*

Cornelio Codreanu - For My Legionaries

This is what should be understood about Fascism: it is first and foremost pragmatic. **Racial views in Italy would have been futile.** Racialism was foreign to the Italian theory of Fascism and was far from being actual praxis for such a country. **Fascism would also go on to oppose the racially imperialist conception of the British.**

"Italian Imperialism, unlike Anglo-Saxon imperialism, did not have as its only motive to conquer markets to place surpluses of finished products and obtain raw materials, differentiated rather because of its emphasis on demographic colonization. That is, the conquest of lands beyond the borders of Italy was to place a surplus population… Economic policy, in this context, had several convergent objectives. ***First, to value the colonies by integrating them into the metropolis, not only economically but as a demographic-cultural extension of the peninsula.****"*

Giuseppe De Corso – The Economic Policies of Italian Fascism Between 1922 and 1943: Brief Considerations Towards its Understanding

Fascism aimed at considering the people in their colonies, as parts of Italy and members of their countries through a slow process of inclusion and education. Italian Fascism was as Racist as it was Anti-Racist—its doctrine often preached otherwise, so did many within the regime, and **the actions of a few barely represented the ideas and goals of Fascism**. Everything ended up practically subordinate to Mussolini rather than the ideals of Racialism that were being preached beyond the Alps. **Even concepts such as the "Spiritual Racism" of Evola would be rejected by a majority of Fascists across the regime**, and ultimately**, his works were foreign to the doctrine and he would openly change parts of his works**

so as to not be seen as a subversive element in the regime.

"Fascist "racism" throughout the period between 1922 and 1938, however distinctive, was essentially benign—and shared little, if any substance, with the malevolent racism so prevalent across the Alps. None of the major Fascist intellectuals were racists of the sort one found in National Socialist environs. In fact, since many, if not most, of the principal ideologues of Fascism were Actualists, they had principled objections to attributing human behavior to material—that is, biological—causes. They simply could not accept the proposition that an entire population, characterized by ill-defined 'racial' traits, could be held, as a body, guilty of anything… The fact is that at the time of the publication of Evola's Sintesi, the most serious students of raciation and comparative psychology in Fascist Italy dismissed his ideas as 'bizarre... occult anti-scientific fantasies.' Evola had early been identified by Fascist critics as a 'lucid madman,' who was not to be taken seriously…'

Mussolini believed that he had no option but to follow Germany into a conflict that he hoped would be of very short duration. Under the circumstances, it became critical to reduce the ideological distance between the two regimes.

Fascist race theory would have to speak to the issues of Aryans and Jews—something, until that time, that standard race theory in Mussolini's Italy did not do. Mussolini, by overtly addressing issues that were central to National Socialist thought, sought to have Hitler's Germany take Fascist Italy more seriously. That would serve Fascism's immediate and general purposes."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

6
APPEAL TO A FRUSTRATED MIDDLE CLASS (A CLASS SUFFERING FROM AN ECONOMIC CRISIS OR FEELINGS OF POLITICAL HUMILIATION, AND FRIGHTENED BY THE PRESSURE OF LOWER SOCIAL GROUPS)

"Hard times also attracted those to Fascism who felt that Socialism could not provide an answer. According to La Stampa, Fascism comprised unemployed former officers, poverty-stricken public employees, slump-hit shopkeepers and contractors, students and young graduates, disaffected youths and ex-revolutionaries who had supported the war. According to a November 1921 census in Il Popolo d'Italia, ***24.3 per cent were agricultural labourers, 15 per cent factory workers, 13 per cent students, 12 per cent owner or tenant farmers, and the rest a mix of shopkeepers, traders, professionals and factory owners.*** *Nearly two-thirds had served in the war, which also meant that they were young. These figures undermine the claim that Fascism was simply a bourgeois counter-revolution."*

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

"The Fascist flirtation with Futurism, which glorified the city, violence, speed, industry and the machine, and its bear hug with the (essentially urban) bourgeoisie which it despised, was not as strong as its deeper romance with the countryside. The countryside was where Mussolini — and the majority of Italians — came from; it was his terra natale. ***The support of farmers and peasants had been why Fascism achieved such swift success before the March on Rome."***

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

"It was not just the property owners who turned to Fascism for help. Fascism also appealed to workers who did not have the party and union card and were thus excluded from the factory or the farm by the closed shop. Fascism had been a city phenomenon up until now. But the majority of those who had fought in the war were 'contadini' — peasants (the Italian word 'contadino' does not have the same negative ring to it as the English 'peasant'). During the winter of 1920-1 Fascism spread like wildfire through the Italian countryside. Mussolini had found his 'trincerocrazia' at last."

"Not only has capitalism not entered into its final crisis anywhere in the world, but Fascism was first successful in marginally industrialized Italy— in a nation that had only begun its industrial development. Italian industrial capitalism was hardly at the end of its life cycle. It was a little more. Moreover, subsequent movements elsewhere in Europe that have been characterized as Fascist proved to have ***been most successful in mobilizing the lower classes in underdeveloped . . . countries.'*** *"*

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

The silly belief that Fascism was merely appealing to a middle class is ridiculous when one considers the background of most Fascist leaders and the consistency of the groups that constituted the initial blackshirts.

Not only did the Fascists engage in strikes and land occupations, but they were mostly backed by peasants and farmers. We can see this with the revolutionary left wing background of the party, in figures such as: Aurelio Padovani, Edmondo Rossoni, The De Ambris Brothers (Alceste and Amilcare), Roberto Farinacci, Michele Bianchi, etc…

The initial appeal of Fascism was directed towards the working class and it would remain this way throughout the regime. The initial Liberal policies and talking points of Mussolini were a mere power move in order to consolidate itself. As many authors point out, after 1925, the regime takes a step towards a Fascist conception of economics through the Labour Charter, the introduction of the Corporate State, the reform of representatives in the legislative branches and the organization of corporations, and the land distribution that would take place throughout the regime (which contradicts a common belief held among Marxist circles).

"The complex of policies that made up autarchy won much less than complete approval from Italy's economic and industrial elite, for it had brought increasing state control, Fascistization, and a foreign policy oriented toward military activism. As Renzo De Felice has written, the economic elite became increasingly alarmed because of "a) the Fascist state's tendency to interfere and expand its own control over economic activity; b) the Fascist elite's tendency to transform itself into an autonomous ruling class and gradually to alter the balance of compromise to its advantage; c) Mussolini's foreign policy which became increasingly aggressive and therefore

correspondingly less attuned to the true interests both of Italy and of the upper bourgeoisie itself. Moreover, autarchy produced a new emphasis on "worker Fascism," with an expansion in the role and activism of the worker syndicates. There was an increase in worker fringe benefits (though not much increase in wages), and in 1939 the huge Dopolavoro recreation program was transferred from the party to the syndicates themselves."

Stanley G. Payne - A History of Fascism 1914-1945

For Mussolini, it had been Marxists and left-wingers who had betrayed Socialism and had failed to support the lower-classes, and even Lenin would be criticized through this standpoint.

"The developed and conscious proletariat is shouting 'Long live Lenin!', thinking that they are shouting 'Long live socialism!'. They do not realize that they are actually crying 'Down with socialism!' The false shepherds are deceiving the masses, who are ready to swear by and die for the new and distant ideals, believing that what has been established in Russia is socialism. This is a colossal lie!... There is not even the beginnings of socialism; there is nothing resembling a socialist regime. Leninism is the perfect negation of socialism. It is the government of a new caste of politicians."

Benito Mussolini - The Accomplices

"Light is no longer shining from the East, where terrible news of death and famine is coming out of Russia; we are receiving desperate appeals by socialists and anarchists in Petrograd against Lenin's reactionary policies."

Benito Mussolini - Which Way is the World Going

"Fascism has made grandiose Social Revolution, Mussolini and Lenin, Soviet and Fascist corporate state, Rome and Moscow. Several stands already taken had to be rectified, we have nothing of which to ask pardon for as both in present and past we are impelled by the same ideal: the triumph of work."

Nicola Bombacci - La Verita

7
AT THE ROOT OF THE UR-FASCIST PSYCHOLOGY THERE IS THE OBSESSION WITH A PLOT, POSSIBLY AN INTERNATIONAL ONE.

This claim is goofy in and of itself. **At the root of EVERY ideology, there's a pathological view of setting up an "us" and "them"**. No matter what ideology you look for, Anarchists, Communists, Libertarians, Theocrats, Social-Democrats, etc… **The appeal of a fight against a group that represents "the opposition" (be it foreign or internal) will always exist.**

The truth of the matter is, that when it comes to Fascism and its interpretations, the Italian interpretation depended upon a Dialectic established by thinkers such as Enrico Corradini and the believers of Socialism of Nations (keep in mind, this is before Fascism came to existence). **This line of thinking supported and endorsed Syndicalism and a State that pursues unity above all else, in a struggle of Proletariat Nations against the ones that exploit and drain them of their resources.**

"While a firm sense of the unity of similars—the union of laborers in modern industry—was the foundation of what the syndicalists conceived as their community, Corradini argued that such a collective, in isolation, could neither prosper nor survive in the contemporary world. Corradini argued that as long as there were nations, workers would constitute only a functional part of an historic and organic whole. Any class, in isolation, could not survive in the contemporary world.

In the world at the beginning of the twentieth century, Corradini maintained, only nations could serve as international actors. The world, almost all nationalists argued, was an arena of Darwinian struggle for survival. If Italian workers expected to survive and prosper in such a world, they required entrepreneurs, functionaries, merchants, financiers, intellectuals, educators, and state officials. Once syndicalists understood that, Corradini concluded, they could only become advocates and practitioners of a national syndicalism—a revolutionary syndicalism that nationalists could wholeheartedly support...

Corradini argued that 'proletarianism' had some singular merits in the Italian environment. He reminded the domestic leaders of the proletariat that for a quarter of a century Italian workers had been forced to leave their homeland to work in lands more prosperous—'capitalist' lands. Emigrant Italian workers throughout the advanced

industrial nations were compelled to submit to the overlordship of foreign capitalists in order to simply survive. Corradini suggested that the distinctions that the syndicalists recognized within Italy were much more emphatic outside of Italy. If domestic capitalists were seen as oppressors, they were of negligible consequence compared to the world dominance of the capitalists of the advanced industrial nations. The advanced capitalist nations maintained an abiding and exacting control over an impoverished "proletarian" Italy. Even if a proletarian class revolution overthrew Italy's impoverished bourgeoisie, Italy itself would remain a proletarian nation subject to the dominance of foreign plutocracies…

Almost from the very commencement of his political activity, Corradini had insisted on the distinction between 'proletarian' and 'plutocratic' nations. Corradini contended that, given those conditions, the less developed nations were condemned to a threat of perpetual dependency on the plutocracies. England would forever command the seas and the financial markets—and France would dominate the Continent with its culture and its armed forces. Italy, capital and resource deficient, would subsist on the sufferance of wealthy nations. It would remain forever an economic and cultural colony of its 'superiors.' 'Rich nations' would forever dominate proletarian Italy."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

This belief constitutes the evolution of Mussolini's dialectic between Producers and Parasites and applies it on an International Scale, which, far from being a mere plot, is more or less a dialectical understanding of the relationship between foreign policy and domestic policy.

If a nation has a boot on its neck, no matter what system the nation has adopted, **the boot will remain there unless/until there's this revolt of Proletariat Nation against Plutocratic Nations.** This is why Mussolini often calls Italy a "Proletariat and Fascist" Nation. Italian Fascism barely appealed to the notion of an international plot, but it more or less had a conception of foreign politics that is no different from any other ideology. (For more, refer to A. James Gregor's Mussolini's Intellectuals).

Blackshirts were filled with Italian Jews and, once again, the movement had received financing from Jewish Bankers. The political move of adopting racial policies led to negative effects upon Italy due to the fact that the rate of assimilation of Italian Jews had been

the highest in Europe.

At the end of the day, this is one of the vague points that is present in EVERY SINGLE IDEOLOGY. **In every ideology, there's always a "scapegoat" or a group that represents an "us" or a "them" to fight against.**

Not to mention, **the Nationalist Conception and the Fascist conception of a country clearly differ if we take into account both the ideological writings and historical records of the academics and ideologues of Fascism** (this is further described in the explanation that Gentile gives on *The Fascist State as a Democratic State* in *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism*).

"This gigantic struggle is nothing other than a phase in the logical development of our revolution; it is the struggle of peoples that are poor but rich in workers against the exploiters who hold on ferociously to the monopoly of all the riches and all the gold of the earth; it is the struggle of the fertile and young people against the sterile people moving to the sunset; it is the struggle between two centuries and two ideas…

***Proletarian and Fascist Italy** stands up a third time, strong, proud, and united as never before (the crowd cries with one single voice: "Yes!"). The single order of the day is categorical and obligatory for all. It already spreads and fires hearts from the Alps to the Indian Ocean; Victory! (The people break out into raucous cheers). And we will win, in order to finally give a **long period of peace** with justice to Italy, to Europe, and to the world."*

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, June 10, 1940

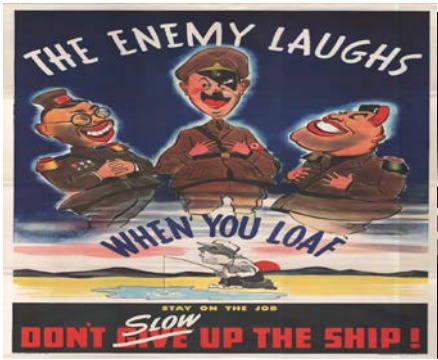
8
THE ENEMIES ARE AT THE SAME TIME TOO STRONG AND TOO WEAK

This is, yet again, another goofy point given the fact that, not only is it too vague, but it can apply to every single ideology, as was mentioned in the previous point. **This is just a mere ideological mechanism that has been in place and used by other ideologies, which plays into the fact that, for this man, the process of defining a term consists of throwing shit at the wall and seeing if it sticks.**

This is not even a doctrinal point but just something that is done. This does not constitute an ideological statement let alone doctrine or praxis, but is just something that is presented in such a way so that it comes off as slander.

Eco understands how to use rhetoric, but can't present it in such a way that shows a genuine understanding of the general outline of Fascism. He cannot account for how his point is present in every other ideology. Moreover, an enemy can be spiritually weak, yet possess the means to outpower you, and inversely, an enemy may lack the means to outpower you, yet may still be spiritually strong.

Ultimately, this is a dialectical proposition that barely characterizes the way in which Fascist Governments actually functioned. Rather, it simply refers to the dynamics of wartime conditions. It's funny, given the fact that **even the Allies did this during World War II against the Axis, using the exact same type of talking points and rhetoric**: "They are dumb yet a menace!", "They have the power yet have one ball!", "They want total war/are animals yet they are bozos!". Once again, refer to the last point for the same kind of rhetorical charade.



9

FOR FASCISM, LIFE IS LIVED FOR A STRUGGLE... THIS, HOWEVER, BRINGS ABOUT AN ARMAGEDDON COMPLEX. SINCE ENEMIES HAVE TO BE DEFEATED, THERE MUST BE A FINAL BATTLE, AFTER WHICH THE MOVEMENT WILL HAVE CONTROL OF THE WORLD. BUT SUCH A "FINAL SOLUTION" IMPLIES A FURTHER ERA OF PEACE, A GOLDEN AGE, WHICH CONTRADICTS THE PRINCIPLE OF PERMANENT WAR.

"Fascism, the more it considers and observes the future and the development of humanity, quite apart from political considerations of the moment, believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace"

Benito Mussolini - Doctrine of Fascism

"One cannot be a Fascist in politics and not a Fascist... in school, not a Fascist in one's family, not a Fascist in one's workplace. Just as the Catholic, if a Catholic, invests all of his life with his religious sentiment: and speaks and works, or remains still, thinks and meditates... as a Catholic. Similarly, the Fascist-whether he goes to parliament or remains in the local association, writes in the newspapers or reads them, provides for his own private life or converses with others, looks to the future or remembers his past and the past of his people-must always remind himself that he is a Fascist!

Thus is revealed that which truly can be said to be the defining trait of Fascism-to take life seriously. Life is labor, effort, sacrifice, and hard work-it is a life in which we well know that there is no pleasure. There is no time for pleasure. Before us there is always the ideal to be realized, an ideal that does not allow us rest. We cannot lose time. Even asleep, we are responsible for the talents that we have been given..."

Giovanni Gentile - What is Fascism?

This is, yet again, another misunderstanding of Eco on the doctrine of Fascism. **He identifies certain rhetoric yet he fails to grasp the outline and praxis of how this thought developed.** This has been a constant flaw of the author that has reoccurred ever since his claims on the *"Anti-Intellectualism of Fascism"*, which, even if he's

seeing the surface, he's ignoring the background.

The desire for struggle in Fascism is that of the actualist doctrine and the constant evolution of thought and National/Individual Life. Even in speeches where Mussolini proclaims that Peace will happen after the defeat of the Allies, it is never mentioned that this era of peace will be eternal (let alone the goal of the struggle). "Peace" will be a victory for the Proletariat Nations for sure, yet it will only give away for new branches of struggle… for there are new conquests and goals that Humanity will work upon in the future!

Struggle is desirable, and it's not a mere desire for war since, for Fascism, struggle starts from the conquest of the self up until the conquest of the stars. **This can be seen in whatever ideologue you look into**, which, once again showcases what we've been seeing from Eco: he looks at the surface, makes the claim, and acts scared—as he ignores the actual truth outside of his claims. Fascism, as a whole, is meant to be a Philosophy of Life—not just a political ideology, which is something that plays into Eco's failure to apprehend Fascism. **Although the doctrine has a great interest in politics, it can also be separated from politics and adopted as a way to handle your personal life.**

"The Center of the System. The third point is this: Fascism is a ***political method****. It declines to define itself rigorously because it is moving forward and developing...*

Fascist writers deride philosophy, and are right to do so to the extent those philosophies present arid abstractions divorced from the breadth of life. Fascism is a philosophy, a philosophy of praxis. Its subject is how to get things done in the human community. Fascism is action. The Fascist state is a person itself, with its own aims and style, independent of the citizens who are its members."

Summary of Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

"The Fascist system is not a political system, but it has its center of gravity in politics. Fascism came into being to meet serious problems of politics in post-war Italy. And it presents itself as a political method. But in confronting and solving political problems it is carried by its very nature, that is to say by its method, to consider moral, religious, and philosophical questions and to unfold and demonstrate the comprehensive totalitarian character peculiar to it. It is only after we have grasped the political character of the Fascist principle that we are able adequately to

appreciate the deeper concept of life which underlies that principle and from which the principle springs. The political doctrine of Fascism is not the whole of Fascism. It is rather its more prominent aspect and in general its most interesting one."

Giovanni Gentile - Philosophic Basis of Fascism

10

ELITISM IS A TYPICAL ASPECT OF ANY REACTIONARY IDEOLOGY, INSOFAR AS IT IS FUNDAMENTALLY ARISTOCRATIC, AND ARISTOCRATIC AND MILITARISTIC ELITISM CRUELLY IMPLIES CONTEMPT FOR THE WEAK… THE LEADER, KNOWING THAT HIS POWER WAS NOT DELEGATED TO HIM DEMOCRATICALLY BUT WAS CONQUERED BY FORCE, ALSO KNOWS THAT HIS FORCE IS BASED UPON THE WEAKNESS OF THE MASSES.

"It could be an anti-Marxist socialism, for instance; a national socialism. The millions of workers who will return to the furrows of their fields after having lived in the furrows of the trenches will realize the synthesis of the antithesis: class and nation."

Benito Mussolini - Trenchocracy

"Mussolini did away with democracy but he did not, like most dictators, use mass murder to retain power. There was no need. He and Fascism had mass appeal because unlike democracy, especially Italian democracy, they got things done and unlike democracy they transformed politics into a form of religion — from an isolated act involving the ballot box to a daily act of religious faith… Fascism was not, as the Left insisted, the creature of big business. It had mass appeal: in October 1922 membership of the PNF stood at 300,000 and a year later at 783,000. Nor was it, as the Left also insisted, financed by big business alone. Its money came from many different sources as De Felice has demonstrated beyond doubt. As Adrian Lyttelton has observed, 'Mussolini was born into power on the shoulders of a mass movement.' But it was not the mass movement which delivered power to Mussolini. He came to power as a result of a coup d'état which was unlike all other coups d'état for two reasons. First, all normal coups d'état involve the army, or a section of the army, taking matters into their own hands. This did not happen. Second, this coup d'état was legal: the King invited Mussolini to become prime minister. The King, interpreting the will of the nation, delivered the government to Mussolini — but not the state."

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

"The interesting point (and a point that is invariably missed by all off-hand anti-Fascists) is that in this new kind of autocratic state, the autocrat actually seeks consent of his people. Far from "not giving a damn" whether the Italian people like Fascism, Mussolini is passionately desirous that his people should like Fascism and he has worked for twelve years to build up their liking in his own dictatorial way."

William Welk - Fascist Economic Policy

"From Germany I returned to Italy and dedicated myself to studying the subject of Fascism. My knowledge of Italian allowed me to penetrate, I would say deeply, into the foundations of the system, and that is how I discovered something that, from that social point of view, was very interesting at my view; Italian Fascism led popular organizations to effective participation in national life, from which the people had always been estranged. Until Mussolini's rise to power, the nation went one way and the worker another, and the latter had no participation in the former. I discovered the resurgence of corporations and studied them thoroughly.

Juan Domingo Perón
(President of Argentina 1946-1955, 1973-1974)

"The worker who fulfills his social duty with no other hope than a piece of bread and the health of his family repeats, on a daily basis, an act of heroism. Labourers are infinitely superior to all false prophets who pretend to represent them. These false prophets have an easy time of it due to the insensitivity of those who have the sacrosanct duty of taking care of labourers. It is for this reason that I was, and am, a socialist.

The accusation of inconsistency is without foundation. My behaviour has always been consistent in the sense of looking to the substance, not the appearance of things. I have adapted myself, socialistically, to reality. As the natural development of society proved more and more of Marx's predictions to be wrong, true socialism retreated from the possible to the probable. The only feasible socialism that can be truly implemented is Corporativism—a merging point, a place of equilibrium and justice, with respect for collective interests."

The Last Testament of Benito Mussolini

This is straight up ironic since, as mentioned at the beginning, **Fascism conceives itself as a "Popular Democratic State". Mussolini, as is pointed out by historians, always looked for the consent and approval of the masses while he held power.**

Fascism had garnered mass support before its arrival to power and this explains its swift victory on the March on Rome. Fascism is Aristocratic in the belief that great men are going to lead masses to victory (refer to Trenchocracy), but it is also populist in its constant support for the working classes and the mass-appeal it had throughout the existence of the regime. Far from "Reactionary", Fascism was in the pursuit of a Revolution of its own, one that would establish a new form of government as a Third Position separated from the old understandings of politics.

This idea that there must be contempt for the weak and lower classes is widely unsourced. Why?

Because Fascism advocates for valuing each and every single member of society, from someone that cleans the streets, up until someone working as a government member. It's goal is to value all the work that is put into building the Nation.

"Fascism does not submerge the individual in the social group. It subordinates him, but does not eliminate him; the individual as a part of his generation ever remaining an element of society however transient and insignificant he may be. Moreover the development of individuals in each generation, when coordinated and harmonized, conditions the development and prosperity of the entire social unit."

Alfredo Rocco - Political Doctrine of Fascism

The easiest and quickest way to rebut this point, is with the conception of Producers and Parasites, which was widely present among Fascist regimes such as those of Mussolini's and Juan Perón's. This dialectic conceives the Nation as a division of two sections: Producers, being the ones that work for the nation, that is everyone that takes part in National Life and contributes with whatever effort it can give; and Parasites, the ones that push for internal division and seek the subversion of the Nation for their own interests.

We can, of course, also refer to the conception that Gentile had of Fascism as a democratic state that employs authoritarianism as only a means to an end. Also, we must not forget that the country was reforming itself into a Republic, which can be seen as the final step towards the Ethical Totalitarian State that Fascism always preached for (here, refer to Rutilio Sermonti's *"on Socialization"*).

"It is thus evident that the aims of Fascism and of Socialism are to a very great extent identical. In fact, it may be said without exaggeration, that what is happening Italy to-day, in the economic

sphere, is substantially what would happen under a Socialist Government that was free from electioneering considerations. To a very great extent Fascism is Socialism. Yet in the political sphere Fascists and Socialists fight each other desperately without realizing that the difference between their respective aims is less than between the aims of either and those of the laissez-faire school. The Socialistic tendencies of Fascism ought to be duly realized both by the adherents and opponents of the movement."

Paul Einzig - The Economic Foundations of Fascism

11
IN SUCH A PERSPECTIVE EVERYBODY IS EDUCATED TO BECOME A HERO… THIS CULT OF HEROISM IS STRICTLY LINKED WITH THE CULT OF DEATH.

"The narrative provided is intended to serve cognitive ends. By pretending that Mussolini's regime found support in nothing other than irrationality and violence, some contemporary commentators have delivered only a parody of Fascist thought. They have left us bereft of any real understanding of one of the major revolutions of our immediate past. That not only affects our comprehension of the past, but may very well impair our understanding of the revolutions in our future. To imagine that the Fascism of the twentieth century was inspired and vindicated by an appeal to simple violence, and hatred is not only a fiction—but may very well be a significantly misleading fiction as well. As a case in point, the number of Fascist intellectuals who advocated war, violence, and hatred for their own sake were both few and marginal."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectuals

From D'annunzio to Marinetti, this type of belief has appeared as a consequence of the Romantic and Futurist tendencies within the regime. It has served as a representation of the ideal of dying beautiful and avoiding the degradation of the body. Mussolini also held a belief where he would often say that he had lived for too long and that now would be the time to pass away. **Nevertheless, this cult of heroism came into existence way before Fascism ever tapped into it up as a means to an end.**

From the supporters of The Socialism of Nations such as Corradini up until Sorel's myths of Violence, many National Syndicalists have this sort of already existing notion of death and martyrdom. This is one of those points where **Eco grabs an aspect that may be present in Fascism (in some form) yet remains to be so vague and wide across a spectrum of ideas (before and after Fascism) that Eco fails to grasp the origins of the understanding that Fascism had.**

"Corradini anticipated that thinking syndicalists would inevitably recognize the reality of the modern world. Syndicalism, with its call to discipline, sacrifice, and heroism, could only eventually become a national syndicalism and become a collateral support for revolutionary nationalism. Corradini, as early as 1909–

11, anticipated an ultimate coming together of both revolutionary movements."

A. James Gregor - Mussolini's Intellectual

Once again… **within the confines of Italian Fascism, the variety of beliefs and approaches within the Doctrine differed among various interpretations, especially at the time where Fascist theory was being developed.**

We can also top this rebuttal off with the point that this ideal has been present among other ideologies just as it has been present with different Fascist beliefs. Eco's point ends up being a dialectical and historical display of ignorance, since **pretty much every other ideology ends up conceiving of a concept of martyrdom and heroism as a form of sacrifice in exchange for the political benefits espoused by the ideology.**

"A civilization must exalt a tradition of heroism. This it may do in war or pyramid building. Liberalism never glorified heroism in theory but, in its frontier empire-building days, it exemplified heroism in its practice."

Lawrence Dennis - Dynamics on War and Revolution

12
MACHISMO (WHICH IMPLIES BOTH DISDAIN FOR WOMEN AND INTOLERANCE AND CONDEMNATION OF NONSTANDARD SEXUAL HABITS, FROM CHASTITY TO HOMOSEXUALITY)

"As Italian and Fascist women you have particular duties to perform: you must be the custodians of the hearths, (the crowd shouts with one voice: "Yes! Yes!"), You must give with your vigilant attention, with your unfailing love, the first imprint on the offspring that we desire to be numerous and vigorous…

Fascist women! For its action of national and social assistance that must go from the cities to the fields, the Regime has counted and is counting on you. ("Yes! Yes!"). "

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Rome, June 20, 1937

Fascism, especially proto-Fascist systems (such as D'annunzio's proto-Fascism in Fiume and Marinetti's Futurist Fascism) promoted sexual liberation and equal rights for women and men. Like the original Fascist manifesto and the Italian Futurist Party's platform, the Charter of Carnaro would come to represent a number of progressive values that would soon be imparted through the poet-soldier's small conquest. Many of D'annunzio's former men would later go on to support Mussolini's Fascist project.

It is worth mentioning the existence of often-disregarded and notoriously homosexual figures within the early stages of Fascism, such as Guido Keller. It is also worth mentioning the regime's approval towards individuals like Federico Garcia Lorca.

The ideal that Fascism had to offer was that of progress, and its influence was even compatible with Feminism. This was especially true in the case of the British Fascists (which, of the Fascist movements around the world, bears the closest resemblance to Italian Fascism), and pro-Fascist Feminists like Mary Richardson and Mary Sophia Allen.

Fascism as a political movement would go on to have former feminists support the ideology, only to fight together under the banner of equal rights for Women. This wasn't foreign to the Italian Movement either, due to the fact that even **Mussolini himself went to the feminist congresses in Rome. Fascism had a strong influence on women who were pivotal to Feminism in Italy, such as Ines Donati**, whom Mussolini would state the following: *"I have known of her fame for a long time and know that she is a fierce*

Italian, an indomitable Fascist".

Funnily enough, upon closer inspection to the Italian regime by different historians, it can be seen that the policies that have been deemed as oppressive or in any sort of way "anti-feminist" came out of the circumstances of the times and requirements of the regime, not really out of an actual rejection of Feminism in on itself from the side of the regime.

"Fascists were not antifeminists, per se, a fact which suggests that ***any effort to explain their postures via some constant notions of sexual frustration, latent homosexuality, or capitalist oppression is eminently implausible.*** *Fascist policies concerning women were the products of a number of contingent circumstances and probability assessments. In effect, antifeminism was not endemic or essential to the Fascist persuasion…*

In their program of 1919, the Fascists advocated suffrage rights for women, and in 1922 Fascists could still allude to the Statute of Carnaro, instituted by Gabrielle D' Annunzio during the occupation of Fiume, as a prefiguration of Fascism. In that Statute (Declaration Twelve) it was insisted that "all citizens, irrespective of sex, have complete rights in the pursuit of employment in industry, the professions, arts and crafts."...

Until 1925 there was little in Fascist ideology or Fascist policy that could be identified as essentially antifeminist. In a Latin country with a long tradition of male dominance, Fascist dispositions were at least mildly progressive. *Certainly there was little in the orthodox socialism of Italy that made it aggressive in the insistence upon women's rights. The issue of women's rights was of marginal interest (with some notable exceptions) to the entire Italian revolutionary movement. By 1927 the situation had materially altered. Not only had Mussolini embarked upon an explicit population policy predicated on large families, but unemployment had begun to become a constant concern...*

With the collapse of the Italian economy in the international crisis of 1929, all these elements coalesced to produce the ideological and legislative orientations that came to constitute the Fascist policy on women. By 1932 there were over one million Italians registered as unemployed. Irrespective of extensive public works programs and the reduction in per capita hours, the rate of unemployment did not begin to abate significantly until 1935. ***In the interim, the Fascist position with regard to women hardened into a set of convictions, buttressed by legislation, that gave the ideology the cast by which it is now identified.***

Given the commitment to the monogamous family as the best vehicle for large and disciplined families, conjoined with the conviction that the emancipation of women constituted a primary cause in the "voluntary limitation in the number of pregnancies," the termination of unwanted pregnancies, and relatively late marriages, Fascist ideologues argued that the movement to emancipate women was counterrevolutionary. Women should be inured to roles that were complementary, rather than competitive, to those discharged by men…

It is reasonably clear that Fascist policy on women was dictated by several very impersonal concerns. The ideological foundation of the policy was the determination to make Italy a ranking power in a competitive world composed of powerful potential enemies. Italy required a population of sixty million souls if it were to face such competitors during the second half of the twentieth century. ***The subsequent policy toward women was the product of this determination and the fact that Italy, between 1880 and 1922, suffered a decline in births from 37.8 per thousand to 30.2 per thousand. This, conjoined with the conviction that feminism, the emancipation of women, was a significant causal factor in that decline, bred the subsequent policy. The increasing unemployment after 1927 exacerbated the antifeminist tendency...***

Fascism may have been instrumental in removing women from the job market (the percentage of Italian women involved in extradomestic employment declined from 30 percent of the labor force in 1920 to 19 percent in 1931) , but the statistics are not unequivocal. Most industrial countries had experienced a decline in the employment of women after 1900. In Italy, Fascist policy may have contributed to this decline, but it is in no ways certain. On the other hand, in certain employment areas like teaching or in the fine arts, the number of women employed increased significantly during the Fascist period. ***All of which suggests that Fascist antifeminism was not particularly successful and/ or may not have been pursued with any special application. In any event, Fascist antifeminism was, at best, a subsidiary concern of Fascist social policy, and made its appearance largely as a consequence of concerns with a declining birthrate and rising unemployment."***

A. James Gregor - Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship

It was not entirely foreign to Fascism to see the inclusion of former suffragettes wherever it appeared. Perhaps the greatest example of this was in the case of Britain, as their case for supporting

equality with women would be entirely based on Doctrine. Being well-versed in Fascism (as it was practiced in Italy), Oswald Mosley, leader of the BUF, would make a strong case for defending the equal rights of women.

"Fascism in Britain will maintain the British principle of honouring and elevating the position of women. We certainly combat the decadence of the present system which treats the position of wife and mother as inferior. On the contrary, we consider this to be one of the greatest of human and racial functions to be honoured and encouraged. But women will be free to pursue their own vocations. Fascism combats the false values of decadence not by force, but by persuasion and example."

Oswald Mosley - Fascism: 100 Questions Asked and Answered

Article worth checking out on British Fascism and Feminism
https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2017/04/why-the-british-union-Fascist-movement-appealed-to-so-many-women.html

Short article on D'annunzio's Fiume
http://www.strangehistory.net/2014/04/17/fiume-and-dannunzio-an-incubator-of-evil/

Many authors have pointed out that Fascism actually came out of a place of "decadence", of sexual liberation, and out of a certain urge for progress. D'annunzio's Fiume would be a foundation in the pursuit of the ideal of Fascism. **His state, although not Fascist in the full-sense of the word, would be a certain form of proto-Fascistic rule and (far from the claims of Eco) it sought to establish a state based on free love and gender equality.**

"Gabriele D'Annunzio, who is not only a great poet but a great soldier, the first soldier of Italy, has dared to perform an act that scared our cowardly government. We salute the Hero and we promise you that we will obey his every nod… Every offense against Gabriele D'Annunzio, each act made against him, constitutes an attack on all the great deeds he has done; it is an attack on Italy itself. Long live D'Annunzio! Long live Italy! Long live Fiume!"

Benito Mussolini - Speech in Milan, September 13, 1919

Fascist Italy, in and of itself, didn't ever really adopt a hostile position against homosexuals as one might think. No laws would appear in favor of or against it. All that can really be pointed out would be the supposed "Islands" (that were mostly filled with

pedophiles and undesirables).

For Fascism, Manhood, just like Womanhood, are equally valuable in the Spirit of improving the Nation. It is through both that you achieve the synthesis of unity that every Fascist nation always looks for.

13

IN A DEMOCRACY, THE CITIZENS HAVE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, BUT THE CITIZENS IN THEIR ENTIRETY HAVE A POLITICAL IMPACT ONLY FROM A QUANTITATIVE POINT OF VIEW—ONE FOLLOWS THE DECISIONS OF THE MAJORITY. FOR UR-FASCISM, HOWEVER, INDIVIDUALS AS INDIVIDUALS HAVE NO RIGHTS, AND THE PEOPLE IS CONCEIVED AS A QUALITY, A MONOLITHIC ENTITY EXPRESSING THE COMMON WILL.

We've all heard the concept of "Everything Inside the State, Nothing Outside the State, Nothing Against the State" by Mussolini. The issue comes into play when people misinterpret this, since it merely refers to a doctrinal conception of the origins of political notions, such as the rights or the idea of an individual.

Within the Fascist conception, the State is the People: **it is a Single Entity made up of different branches, in the same way a Person is made of different body parts**. **The Individual can only have rights inside the State, not outside of the State. The Individual is indeed part of something greater, yet, should maintain its individuality since it is the conception of great individual men that carries Fascism. It is the ideal that, since we are all in this together, we all have something to contribute to society. This doesn't mean that the regime will adapt itself to you, neither will you adapt yourself to it, but that both will work hand by hand to achieve both personal goals and national goals.**

You, as an individual, are valuable within Fascism, but you still have a duty since you've been allowed to work within the framework that the State enables you to work through (not to mention, there are the benefits that you get for being part of it).

It is here where Eco carries on the trend we've been noticing since the beginning: he makes claims, cries, moans, yet, he fails to grasp the meaning of what's behind it or if what he's saying is really true.

The other issue that comes up is that his claims are SO BROAD that they also apply to a lot of other ideologies out there. That they're not solely or necessarily born of Fascism makes it futile to believe that they are unique to **Fascist beliefs.** Many of the points can be applied Anti-Fascist or Non-Fascist regimes.

The conception that Fascism didn't engage in any sort of

participatory activities is also a lie, due to the constant reforms that the regime would adopt based on consulting with the population and the fact that the main goal of Italian Fascism was, from the start to finish, a Republic that engaged in Socialization of the Means of Production along Participatory Measures for Workers. For this, I can provide the following excerpt of Rutilio Sermonti's On Socialization:

"The fundamental canon of the Fascist revolution was that of gradualism, both so as not to provoke a tragic crisis and because truly profound innovations cannot be made by striking left and right, but only allowing the popular "forma mentis " to evolve in the desired direction. Whoever speaks of a breakdown, or of substantial change, or of regret or even of a return to the origins is unknown, can only do so due to lack of information, superficiality or taking sides. It is clear that the socialization of 1944 is nothing more than pure and distilled corporatism and corporatism is synonymous with Fascism. In this sense, the path to socialization had different progressive stages:

First phase: Trade union law (Law of April 3, 1926 Number 563). *With this law, trade union associations, both employers and workers, were entrusted with the delicate public function of establishing with legislative effect the conditions of work and remuneration that were the object of secular conflict.*

Second phase: Carta del Lavoro, published on April 21, 1927 as a pragmatic declaration of the PNF and converted into a State law thirteen years later. *It's important because it solemnly sanctions that both work, in all its forms, and private initiative, in the field of production, are national duties and functions that must be regulated and supervised by the State. Labor is, therefore, an instrument of the nation (as well as capital), not an instrument of capital.*

Third phase: Corporations (Fundamental Law of February 3, 1934 Number 136). *Were organs of the State established by productive branches and guardians of their demands. They were made up equally of representatives of the trade union associations, of the two "parties" interested in each branch. Therefore, the workers' representatives thus formulated, together with the business community, the production directives that the companies had to obey. The exaltation and responsibility of the "work factor" had taken a good leap forward.*

Fourth phase: The reform of political representation (Law of January 19, 1939 Number 129). *It was the decisive move to "organic representation", that is, by functions and not by*

unqualified generic consensus. For the problem that concerns us, the National Councilors (who replaced the deputies) were half members of the National Council of Corporations. It means that the workers' representatives sat as such and as such in the highest legislative body. Thus, in public law, any subordination of work to capital was definitely abolished.

Fifth phase: The reform of the civil codes of 1940 (Law of January 3, 1941 Number 14). *It is truly unique that none of the commentators refer to it, as if the idea of socialization was a cricket that jumped at Mussolini's head as he flew out of Campo Imperatores alongside Otto Skorzeny. However, in that code there was already socialization. There we find the responsibility of the employer (or who represents him if he is anonymous) defined as "head" of the company and not owner or employer. There we find the responsibility of the employer to the State for his management of the company. It is evident, as I have stated before, that socialization was only the last phase of a journey that was contained in the DNA of Fascism and that, if anything, it was slightly anticipated and not delayed. The objectives of the socialization of the Italian Social Republic had nothing to do with the vague concept of "social justice", the master key of all demagogues, it was rather the successive step towards the construction of an organized society"*

14
FASCIST SCHOOLBOOKS MADE USE OF AN IMPOVERISHED VOCABULARY, AND AN ELEMENTARY SYNTAX, IN ORDER TO LIMIT THE INSTRUMENTS FOR COMPLEX AND CRITICAL REASONING.

"Fascism is thought of as well and it has a theory, which is an essential part of this historical phenomenon, and which is responsible in a great measure for the successes—that have been achieved. To the existence of this ideal content of Fascism, to the truth of this Fascist logic we ascribe the fact that though we commit many errors of detail, we very seldom go astray on fundamentals, whereas all the parties of the opposition, deprived as they are of an informing, animating principle, of a unique directing concept, do very often wage their war faultlessly in minor tactics, better trained as they are in parliamentary and journalistic manoeuvres, but they constantly break down on the important issues."

Alfredo Rocco - The Political Doctrine of Fascism

"Education involves free action, the vocation of our souls, the duty of humankind, an act which, more nobly than any other, allows the human being to actualize his superior nature. Animals do not educate themselves even when they raise their young. They do not form families, ethical organisms in which differentiated members organize themselves into systems. Human beings, on the other hand, freely and consciously, acknowledge our children as we do our parents and brothers as extensions of ourselves. In such circumstances we consciously develop our respective personalities and seek to assist in the development of the personality of others. In the human family, in society, in the city, in any community, we constitute but one collective spirit, with common needs that are satisfied through individual activity within a social matrix. If human beings are said to be political or social animals, one can also say that they are animals that educate."

Giovanni Gentile - The Reform of Education

"Between 1923 and 1936 the total number of primary school pupils rose from just under 3,981,000 to 5,187,000, secondary school pupils from 326,604 to 674,546 and university students from 43,235 to 71,512. Bottai tried hard to encourage freedom of speech

and criticism among young Fascists on the correct grounds that without them the Fascist ambition to create a new ruling class would fail. For a while during the 1930s the young did enjoy remarkable freedom of expression; much more so than adult Italians. Young Fascists openly said that the corporate state, for example, should not just manage but own the means of production."

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

"Fascism believed that mankind could progress, though Mussolini had quickly lost faith in the pre-Fascist generations.... This is why Fascism focused such an enormous amount of energy on the Fascistizzazione of youth. The Nazis, on the other hand, did not look forward but back, aspiring to re-create a mythical Aryan. For them the modern was bad. ***For the Fascists it was not. The Fascists did not burn books or ban modern art."***

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

The fact that this is even a point at all has to be the most hilarious thing about Eco: **he just insults Fascists by calling them dumb**, **from which he then proceeds to call it a day and pretend he is right.** It truly gets ironic when one considers that **the one reform that represented the aspirations of Fascism, both in the present and future, was the Reform of Education**. Not only that, but the one of the main mottos of the regime was based on the notion of the Book and the Rifle. Spiritual/Intellectual Formation was just as important as the capacity to take action, since it was the latter that got directed with a fervent belief in the former.

Many authors have pointed out the efforts of educating and improving upon the formation of Italians within Fascist Italy. The regime ultimately produced Nobel Prize winners such as Luigi Pirandello, Guglielmo Marconi, Jacinto Benavente, etc. This claim of Eco is mostly made to be slander due to the fact that upon closer look, we can clearly see that the regime not only had a theoretical model of its own, but it gave way for complex terminologies and authors that were highly inspired by thinkers like Giovanni Gentile. One example of this can be seen in British historian R. G. Collingwood, who would follow Gentile's idealistic beliefs.

We must not forget either that Gentile would start up a school of thought known as Actual Idealism (for more on this, refer to his text *The Theory of Mind as a Pure Act*), which the regime would base its policies on and would use to defend as its way of improving upon itself with constant changes in the pursuit of struggle, thus the changing nature of Fascism and the need to

constantly adapt it to reality. Mussolini once said, *"The sanctity of an ism is not in the ism; it has no sanctity beyond its power to do, to work, to succeed in practice. It may have succeeded yesterday and failed tomorrow. Failed yesterday and will succeed tomorrow. The machine, first of all, must run!"*

Critical thinking was endorsed and so was a difference of opinion, nevertheless, the ability to subvert or engage in divisive acts was not allowed. **The regime would certainly attempt its Ethical Totalitarian Dream, but nevertheless, it would include different thinkers within its sphere as a way to keep diversity going in the sense of what path is the best. The varieties of proposals on what to do and how to achieve its goals were different due to the complexity of each of the members of both the National Fascist Party and the later Republican Fascist Party.**

We also must not forget that the way in which the movement rose was highly divided among different thinkers and currents that would often directly oppose one another, yet, somehow they were all able to find common unity within the creed of Fascism. **Even though some left the movement afterwards, the variety of and need for diversity of thought within Fascism has always been necessary and endorsed.**

"The most obvious schism within Fascism was between Farinacci and Bottai; between intransigentismo and revisionismo. Mussolini said that they were merely 'Two keys on the same piano' but Bottai's Critica Fascista said that while he was Fascism's 'Holy Water' Farinacci was its 'Devil'. Bottai did not believe that the party should control the state but that it should connect the state with the nation via its officials who should be elected by members and enjoy complete freedom of speech. There were many other currents of opinion within Fascism — the unions, the ex-nationalists, the fiancheggatori — notably described in an article in Critica Fascista in 1925 as 'The Five Souls of Fascism' — each one more or less at odds with the other"

Nicholas Farrell - Mussolini: A New Life

At the end of the day, it is the constant need (that Fascism has pursued to actualize its doctrine) and the refusal (that it has maintained to formally establish a deadset reality) that allows it to contain so many currents of thought (be it nationalist or internationalist) within its general outline. **The necessity for Fascism to have some kind of internal mechanism for feedback**

can always be seen. The fact that there were so many discussions and schools of thought (regarding praxis and theoretical interpretation) is what makes it so unique. From the theories of Universal Fascism to the Fascist School of Mysticism, **there was always a variety of thought that was endorsed by the regime itself in order to push for the permanent revolution that Fascism aimed to create.**

"When it is written that we are the white guard for the bourgeoisie, it is the vilest of lies. I defended, and I state this with full conviction, workers' progress. Amongst the principal causes for the fall of Fascism I blame the deaf and merciless fight of certain financial and industrial groups who, in their mad egoism, feared and hated Fascism as the worst enemy of their inhuman interests. I must say for the purpose of justice, that the Italian capital, the part which is legitimate and holds itself up with the ability of its industry, has always understood the needs of society, even when they required sacrifice to address new labour terms. The humble folk of labour have always loved me and love me still...

Nobody will be able to erase twenty years of Fascism from Italy's history. I have no illusion regarding my fate. They will not give me a trial, because they know that from a defendant I would become a prosecutor. They will probably murder me and then claim that I committed suicide, overcome by remorse. He who fears death has never lived, and I have lived, perhaps even too much. Life is nothing more than an intersection between two eternities: the past and the future. As long as my star shone, I was enough for all. Now that it fades, everybody is not enough for me. I will go where destiny will want me because I always did what fate requested of me.

Fascists who will remain faithful to principles will need to be exemplary citizens. They must respect the laws that the people will give, and cooperate loyally with legitimate authorities to help them heal, as quickly as possible, the fatherland's wounds. Whomever will behave differently will demonstrate that he no longer supports the fatherland when he has to serve it from below. Fascists, in other words, will have to act out of passion, not resentment. Their behaviour will depend on a speedier historical rehabilitation of Fascism. Because now it is night, but later, day will break…

Today I forgive those who don't forgive me and condemn me, thereby condemning themselves. I think of all those to whom it will be denied for years to love and suffer for the fatherland, and I would like them to feel not only witnesses of a defeat, but also bearers of a rebirth..."

The Last Testament of Benito Mussolini/Last Thoughts of the Duce

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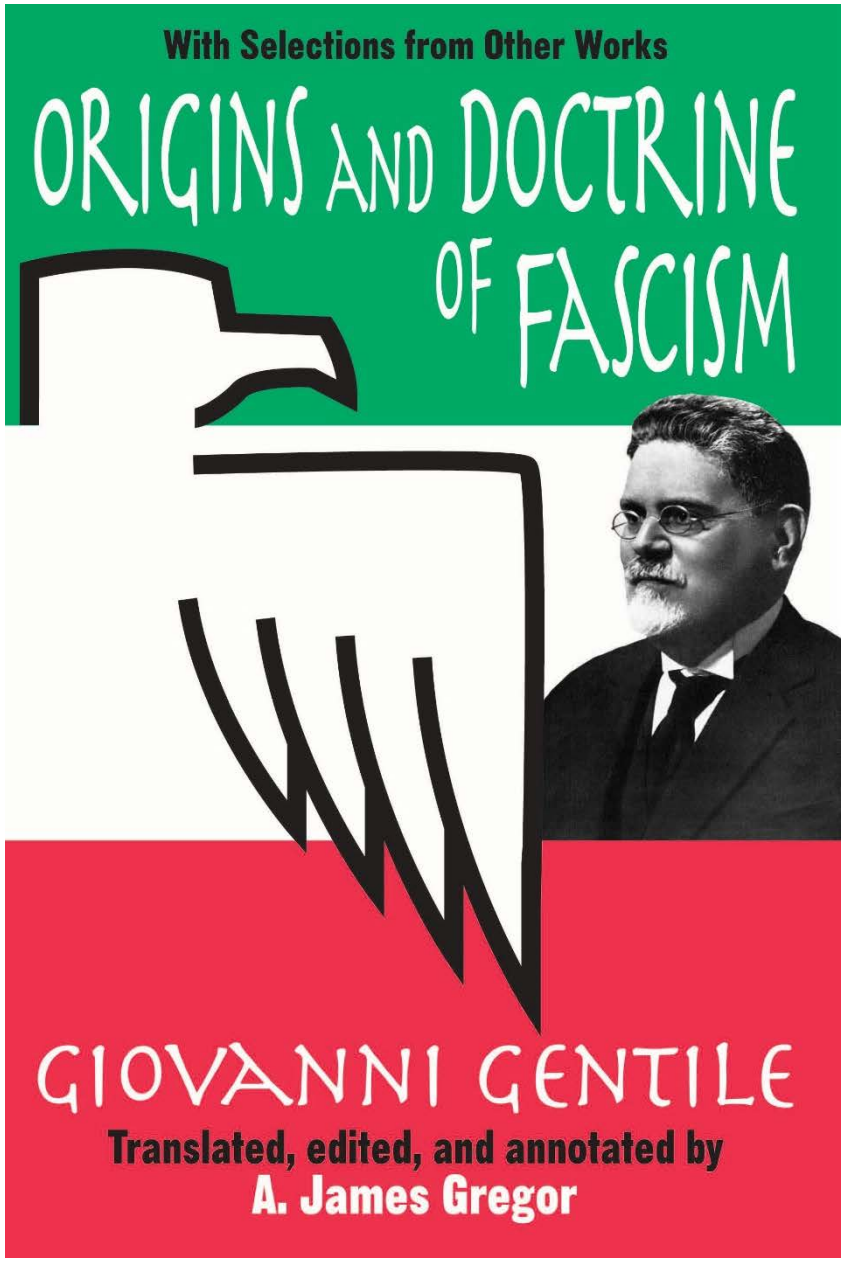
With Selections from Other Works
ORIGINS AND DOCTRINE OF FASCISM
GIOVANNI GENTILE
Translated, edited, and annotated by
A. James Gregor

Origins and Doctrine of Fascism

Giovanni Gentile

(1929)

Giovanni Gentile
(1875-1944)
Origini e dottrina del Fascismo
(1929)
Rome: Libreria del Littorio

This work is dedicated to
PAOLINO LEONE
who died in battle at the age of eighteen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATIONS

A. James Gregor

One of the better interpreters of the thought of Giovanni Gentile, Augusto Del Noce, identified Gentile's *Origini e dottrina del Fascismo*, the translation of which is herewith provided, as a "document of major importance."[1] In Del Noce's judgment, Gentile's short exposition on its origins and doctrine was crucial to understanding Fascism's intellectual, emotional, and political substance.

Gentile's exposition in the *Origins* was clearly intended for an Italian audience.[2] As a consequence, the historic context behind his account is largely unknown to Anglo-American readers. Figures like Antonio Rosmini, Vincenzo Gioberti, and Ugo Foscolo are totally unfamiliar to an English-speaking readership. There is, perhaps, a vague familiarity with the name of Giuseppe Mazzini, but few could identify many of the tenets of his thought. Granted all that, knowledge of specific Italian literary, philosophic, and political personages is not essential in order to appreciate Gentile's account of the origins and doctrine of Fascism.

Gentile's claim is that Italy's involvement in the First World War was characterized by several important features: (1) it was initiated by a "directive minority" that succeeded in infusing "masses" with their conviction; and (2) it was not fought for the acquisition of material gain. Those claims set the stage for the further exposition.

The first contention reflected Gentile's considered judgment concerning complex political events. "History," Gentile was convinced, "is not made by heroes nor by masses; but by heroes who sense the inarticulate, yet powerful, impulses that move masses. [In the making of history] the masses find a person who succeeds in making explicit their obscure moral sentiments. The moral universe is that of the multitudes; and multitudes are governed and energized by an idea whose precise features reveal themselves to but few, an *elite*, who then proceed to inspire

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[1] Augusto Del Noce, *Giovanni Gentile: Per una interpretazione fi losofi ca della storia contemporanea* (Bologna: Il mulino, 1990), p. 300.

[2] Gentile prepared other works for foreigners, "The Philosophy of Fascism," herewith provided was one and the *Dottrina politica del Fascismo*, prepared for the "Course in Fascist Doctrine and Activity for Foreigners" for the University of Padua, was another.

masses to give form and life to history."[3]

That interpretation of the dynamics of social change was shared by most of the significant social thinkers of the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth centuries[4]—and Gentile was convinced of the merit of that assessment before there was an organized Fascism. He had expressed that characterization in his essays, written for more popular audiences, as early as 1918—before the manifest appearance of a Fascist movement.[5]

The second contention found in the opening pages of *Origini e dottrina del Fascismo* referred to the common motive that bound together nationalists, revolutionary syndicalists, Futurists, and philosophical idealists. That motive, while "ideal" rather than "material," was not the defense of France or the United Kingdom—nor was it to protect "democracy" against the impostures of the "authoritarian" Germans and Austrians. The purpose of intervention in the First World War, "with or against Germany," was *the redemption of Italy*, begun with the Risorgimento, the nineteenth century effort to unite the Italic peninsula in a single nation. "Entry into the war," Gentile argues, "was necessary in order to finally unite the nation through the shedding of blood." Only that could create a "true nation," one that would "make itself valued and of consequence in the world." The purpose of Italy's intervention in the First World War was to finally participate in the making of history—never again to live "in the shadow" of others.[6]

For Gentile, the First World War brought into sharp relief the "two souls" of contemporary Italy, one that sought the continuation of the efforts of the Risorgimento, and the other that lapsed back into the behaviors of the "old Italy"—the Italy of empty rhetoric, passivity, egoistic amoralism, velleity, and anarchy. The first sought an Italy that was united and integral, that was "serious," with a seriousness that was religious in character, and infused with faith. It was a "soul" that sought the grandeur of the nation. Gentile identifies that "soul" with the thought of Giuseppe Mazzini.

In his exposition, Gentile seeks to establish a direct continuity

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[3] Giovanni Gentile, *Dottrina politica del Fascismo* (Padua: CEDAM, 1937), p. 18.

[4] See A. James Gregor, *The Ideology of Fascism: The Rationale of Totalitarianism* (New York: Free Press, 1969), chap. 2.

[5] Giovanni Gentile, *Dopo la vittoria: Nuovi frammenti politici* (Rome: La Voce, 1920), pp. 5-8.

[6] At the end of the Fascist experiment, Mussolini is reported to have said that Fascism was an effort to end "eighteen centuries of invasions and misery,...of servitude, of intestine conflict and ignorance." Benito Mussolini, *Testamento politico di Mussolini* (Rome: Pedanese, 1948), p. 33.

between that thought, the Risorgimento, and Fascism. It was an effort that was to continue throughout the Fascist period, and found expression in the notion that the Fascist revolution was one that was "conservative"— preserving the revolutionary elements of Italy's modern political and economic developments of the preceding century in order to construct upon them.[7]

The effort was clearly designed to serve several purposes, one of the most important of which was to provide an answer to Benedetto Croce's claim that Fascism represented nothing more than a radical discontinuity in Italy's *liberal* political development. By the time that Gentile wrote the *Origins*, Croce had assumed an anti-Fascist intransigency, and his argument was employed to make of Fascism a meaningless "parenthesis" in the history of the nation.

Fascist intellectuals were to argue that Fascism drew on living elements of Italy's past—and was a perfectly comprehensible consequence of their accelerated revolutionary maturation.[8] Fascist intellectuals argued for continuity and anti-Fascists argued for discontinuity. It is a dispute that remains unresolved to this day. The notion that Italy immediately before, and certainly after, the First World War, was a divided, if not fragmented, nation is not in dispute. That there were "two Italies," one of which was "Mazzinian," and the other "anti-Mazzinian," was a common conviction. What is more interesting is the fact that Mussolini himself, apparently under the influence of Gentile, gradually accepted the distinction—and ultimately appealed to Mazzinian ideas to support his political positions.[9]

The "Mazzinian" ideas with which Fascism came to be infused were "Mazzinian" only in so far as Mazzini's ideas were interpreted by Gentile. Gentile saw in Mazzinian convictions philosophical idealism, a call to national mission, a consuming morality, a seriousness of purpose, religiosity, anti-individualism, totalitarian unity, an invocation to selfless duty, and the centrality of the state—all functional requirements for a nation undergoing late economic and industrial development in the early twentieth century, in an international environment dominated by hegemonic "plutocracies."[10]

None of this is difficult to understand. We have witnessed

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[7] See Sergio Panunzio, *Lo stato Fascista* (Bologna: L. Cappelli, 1925), pp. 21-30.

[8] See Gioacchino Volpe, *Italia in cammino* (Rome: Volpe, 1973), pp. 7-24 and *passim.*

[9] Del Noce, *Giovanni Gentile*, pp. 300, 330.

[10] See A. James Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

similar postures, political and social, assumed by revolutionary movements and revolutionary regimes in places as diverse as Eastern Europe, Latin and Caribbean America, the Middle East, Asia and, on occasion, in Africa. What distinguishes Gentile's thought, in some measure, is its insistence on *liberty* and *freedom* as the critical center of Fascist revolutionary thought.

Anglo-Americans have long suffered a curious intellectual affliction: they have been prepared to entertain a conviction that Marxist-Leninists—who have supervised some of the most thoroughgoing totalitarian political systems of the twentieth century—were nonetheless committed to a host of positive normative convictions such as equality, democracy, and freedom. They have *not* been prepared to consider the possibility that Fascist intellectuals held some of the very same convictions. Western intellectuals were prepared to argue that Marxist-Leninist intellectuals were betrayed by their leaders in the violation of equality, democracy, and freedom. They were *not* prepared to consider the same argument with respect to any Fascist commitment to such values. Marxist-Leninist intellectuals were betrayed; Fascist intellectuals were simply liars, frauds, and mountebanks.

The truth is that Gentile held *freedom* and *liberty* to be central normative convictions of Fascist doctrine. We may argue that such values were betrayed by Fascism, but we cannot insist that a case for them was not made by Fascist intellectuals. Gentile argued that the Fascist state was fundamentally *democratic* and predicated on *liberty*. For Gentile, the concepts were legitimately contested.

For Gentile, only when the individual fully identifies with the community, and its expression in the state, is *true* freedom and democracy possible. Like Marxist-Leninists, Gentile held that the individual is unreal, restricted, and unfree, outside the multiple relationships established in community with others. The individual for Gentile is, in essence, a *communal-being* (a *Gemeinwesen*). Full freedom and democracy for such a creature finds expression only in identity with the community (in Gentile's case, with the nation and its political expression in the state). How that identity is achieved is argued in Gentile's technical philosophical works.[11] For the purposes of the present rendering, Gentile provides a non-technical account in the

[11] There are a number of works available in English that provide insight into Gentile's technical philosophy, included among them are H. S. Harris, *The Social Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960); Roger W. Holmes, *The Idealism of Giovanni Gentile* (New York: Macmillan, 1937); Pasquale Romanelli, *The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile: An Inquiry into Gentile's Conception of Experience* (New York: Birnbaum, 1937); and A. James Gregor, *Giovanni Gentile: Philosopher of Fascism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001).

selections herewith provided from his *La riforma dell'educazione* where the initial thoughtless "freedom" of students is reconciled with the "true freedom" of unity with the "authority" of informed instruction.

For Anglo-Americans, who have limited access to the Italian literature of the Fascist period, it is important to appreciate that Mussolini recognized that Gentile provided the normative rationale for Fascism and that whatever objections were raised, by both Fascists and anti-Fascists, Gentile's views would ultimately prevail. For Mussolini, Gentile was the philosopher of Fascism.[12]

Gentile provides an answer to the prevailing folk-wisdom of political science that Fascism was anti-intellectual, irrational, mindless, and inhumane. Whatever inhumanity, thoughtlessness, and perversity can legitimately be attributed to Fascism cannot be the consequence of the lack of a reasonably well-articulated and measurably persuasive normative doctrine. In dealing with Fascism as a doctrine, one can do no less than traditionally has been done with respect to Marxism-Leninism as a doctrine: one must consider it dispassionately and objectively in terms of the criteria employed to measure the credibility of *any* body of political thought.

The provision of a translation of the *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism* in its entirety, and selections from *What is Fascism* and *The Reform of Education*, are supplied as insights into the doctrine of Fascism, the debt of that doctrine to the thought of Giovanni Gentile, and the continuity of doctrine in time prior to the advent of Fascism. As has been argued elsewhere, Fascism grew out of the despair and humiliation of an Italy that had long been subject to the pretensions of the advanced industrial democracies.[13] It found its intellectual and normative rationale in the thought of Giovanni Gentile.

Some liberties have been taken in the translations, and no attempt has been made to preserve Gentile's singular literary style—sometimes baroque and sometimes synoptic. Rather, it is hoped that the translations are relatively easy to read and understand—and that they faithfully convey something of the substance of Gentile's ideas.[14] Inserts appear within brackets, and annotations appear in the endnotes

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[12] Del Noce, *Giovanni Gentile*, pp. 310, 312, 323; see Yvon De Begnac, *Palazzo Venezia: Storia di un regime* (Roma: La Rocca, 1950), pp. 540, 541, 619, 641 and Gisella Longo, *L'Istituto nazionale Fascista di cultura: Gli intellettuali tra partito e regime* (Rome: Antonio Pellicani, 2000), chap. 1.

[13] See A. James Gregor, *Phoenix: Fascism in Our Time* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), chap. 2.

[14] Two major works of Gentile are available in English: Giovanni Gentile, *The Theory of Mind as Pure Act* (New York: Macmillan, 1922) and *Genesis and Structure of Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960).

with the intention to clarify or augment some matters that arise in the texts. Footnotes are presented as they appear in the original Italian.

1 - THE DIVIDED SPIRIT OF THE ITALIAN PEOPLE BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

For Italy, its involvement in the First World War was the resolution of a profound spiritual crisis. It is from that reality that one must commence if one wishes to understand the slow and laborious maturation of some spiritual aspects of the nation's decision, in the first months of 1915, to enter into combat against the Central Powers, who at that point in time, were Italy's allies. From that point one can understand why the war had such singular moral and political consequences for Italy. The history of the war is not to be understood only in terms of a tissue of economic and political interests and military actions. The war was fought, first willed, then sensed and conceived worthy, by Italians: by a people composed of a majority led by a directive minority. It was willed, felt, and valued with such spirit that it could not be dismissed by Italy's statesmen and military leaders. They had to deal with it. More than that, the popular spirit influenced them and conditioned their actions. It was a spirit that embodied a sentiment that was not altogether clear nor coherent, neither easily determinable nor recognizable in general. There was neither unity at the outbreak of the war nor at its conclusion. At the end of the war, the different tendencies were no longer subject to the discipline which, during the war, had been imposed. That discipline was the result of the will of some, as well as the necessity of circumstances. After the war, there was no agreement [among Italians] because, to overlook the minor variations, there were in the nation's soul two distinct currents, representing essentially two irreducible souls. They had struggled for two decades, doggedly contesting the field, in the effort to achieve that reconciliation that seems to always require a war fought and a final victory—for the triumph of one. In such a contest, only the victors can conserve that which is salvageable from the vanquished.

One need only refer to the tortured history of Italian neutrality—to understand that there were not simply two political opinions or two historical conceptions that found themselves opposed, but two souls, each with its own fundamental orientation and its own general and dominant exigency. The enflamed polemics between the interventionists and those who chose noninvolvement, the different postures that the arguments of the interventionists assumed, the facility with which they accepted all the ideas, the most diverse and opposed, that were offered in support of intervention, and the means, of every kind, which the neutralists employed to defeat what they sincerely conceived to be the supreme tragedy of war testified to that.

For the one, the essential thing was to make war: with

Germany or against Germany. To enter the war, to throw the nation, willing or unwilling, into the conflict—not for Trento, Trieste or Dalmatia, and certainly not for specific political, military or economic advantages that those annexations might provide, nor for the colonial acquisitions that others anticipated. These particular ends, of course, were to be taken into account. But entry into the war was necessary in order to finally unite the nation through the shedding of blood. The nation had been formed more through good fortune than through the valor of its sons—more the result of favorable contingencies than through the strength of the intrinsic will of the Italian people—a will conscious of itself, its interest in unity and its right to unity.

The war was seen as a way to cement the nation as only war can, creating a single thought for all citizens, a single feeling, a single passion, and a common hope, an anxiety lived by all, day by day—with the hope that the life of the individual might be seen and felt as connected, obscurely or vividly, with the life that is common to all—but which transcends the particular interests of any. The war was sought in order to bring the nation together—in order to render it a true nation, real, alive, capable of acting, and ready to make itself valued and of consequence in the world—to enter into history with its own personality, with its own form, with its own character, with its own originality, never again to live on the borrowed culture of others and in the shadow of those great people who make history. To create, therefore, a true nation, in the only way the creation of every spiritual reality is undertaken: with effort and through sacrifice. That which frightened the others—the wise men, the realists—was the thought of the moral risks to which the war would expose a young nation, never having been tested in a national conflict, not sufficiently prepared, neither morally nor materially, for such a trial, not sufficiently established in its structure to throw itself into a conflict that threatened the nation with collapse on the occasion of its first test. Among the wisest of the wise there was the calculation that neutrality in the war might produce more abundant benefits than victory in that war: tangible, determinate, material benefits, those which, for the pundits of politics, are the only ones worthy of consideration.

That was precisely the point of contention. The neutralists calculated, and the interventionists committed themselves to the war for an intangible, impalpable, non-measurable moral concern—at least in terms of the judgment of others. That moral concern, however, proved to be more weighty than all the rest for those who accepted it. It is evident that calculations of advantage, of whatever order there might be, presupposes that there are those who profit, who are in a

position to profit, and gain advantage. They defend and sustain all that as though it were important to one's selfhood. The fact is that the development of one's personality is the foundation and the principle of everything.

But everything can be nothing, for the individual and for peoples, without the will which can, and should serve, to make determinations of value. The will and the consciousness of self, character, individuality solid and powerful, are among the greatest riches that dying parents can leave their children, and which provides the inspiration for those statesmen who work for their people.

In the political conflicts before the advent of the Great War, Italy's duality of soul was manifest; one expression was to struggle against the neutralism of public opinion with ever-increasing insistence. The neutralists sought to resist involvement in the war not through the government, the center of legally constituted political power, but through Parliament. Parliament, at that time, seemed the source of all initiatives, the very foundation of the State. The Parliament became increasingly menacing and its behaviors more and more irreconcilable with the nation's executive, as though intent upon bringing the nation to the very threshold of civil war.

That fratricidal war was avoided only through the intervention of the King, who provided the government the power to declare war. [1]

That was the first decisive step toward the solution of the grave moral and political crisis [that characterized Italy before its involvement in the war].

[1] Over the years the Italian parliament, through custom, had become responsible for the declaration of war. On the occasion of the declaration of war in 1915, the king had restored that power to himself.

2 - THE NEW ITALY OF THE RISORGIMENTO

The crisis of which we have spoken, had remote origins, with roots deep in the Italian spirit—a spirit of recent history, easily isolated, the end result of the secular development of its civilization. Italy's more recent history is that of the Risorgimento—the national movement of reunification of the nineteenth century—at which time this new Italy awakened and sought to arise and affirm itself. What were the active forces of the Risorgimento, together with the complex of external and internal conditions within which they were to operate?

There was the mass of the Italian people, to whom some historians today tend to attribute a notable if not predominate influence; there was English sympathy and French assistance; there was the war between Prussia and Austria, and between Prussia and France, and so forth, that could only but have impact on the Risorgimento. Without Cavour, Napoleon III would never have fought in Lombardy. But the primary causal agent is always an idea become person, with a will that pursues determinate ends—a cognizant will that has a program to realize, a concrete thought, effective in history. There is no doubt that the Risorgimento was the consequence of the labor of a few; and could be nothing other than the labor of a few. The few, in so far as they were the conscience and the will of an epoch, were the agents of history. They recognized the forces that were available, and employed that which was really the only active and effective force available to them—their own will.

That will was the thought of poets, of thinkers, of political writers, who at times know how to speak a language that resonates with a universal sentiment—capable of being its embodiment. From Alfieri to Foscolo, from Leopardi to Manzoni, from Mazzini to Gioberti they wove together a new fabric that was a new thought, a new spirit, a new Italy—that would distinguish itself from the old through a simple, but enormously important feature: it would take life seriously while the older Italy would not. Throughout history there was talk of immortal Italy; it was the subject of song; it was proposed in prose and in rhyme—with every form of argument. It always was an Italy lodged in the thought of intellectuals, and in doctrines more or less remote from life, in which those who take things seriously are required to draw out the implications of convictions and translate ideas into action. It was necessary that Italy descend into the hearts of Italians, together with all the other ideas relative to life's realities, there to become positive and vital elements. [To understand that is to understand] the significance of Giuseppe Mazzini's motto: thought and action. That was the greatest revolution anticipated and realized by

him. He inculcated into many the conviction that only that thought which expressed itself in action was real thought. Those who responded—it must be remembered—were a minority—but sufficient to raise the issue where it could be publicly considered. Life was seen not as a game, but a mission. The individual has a law, a goal, through which he discovers his proper value, and for which sacrifice is necessary, with the individual forfeiting private comforts and daily interests, and, should it be necessary, his life [in order to reach that goal]....

No revolution displayed more of these features of idealism, of thought that preceded action, and its satisfactory outcome, than did the Risorgimento. It was not life's material needs or diffuse popular sentiments that erupted in revolutionary disturbances. The demonstrations of 1847 and 1848 were the work of intellectuals—as one would say today—and in the majority of cases, the result of the actions of a minority of patriots, who were the bearers of those ideals and who would move both rulers and the populace to their realization. There has never been a revolution, in that sense, that was more idealistic than that which fulfilled itself in the Italian Risorgimento.

Idealism is a faith in an ideal reality that must be sought. It is a conception of life that must not limit itself to present fact, but which must progress and transform itself incessantly in order to conform to a superior law that acts upon souls with the force of the soul's own convictions. Idealism was the very substance of the teachings of Mazzini.[2] That idealism, well or ill understood, was the spirit of our Risorgimento; and because of the moral influence which it exercised and the recognition with which it was received outside of Italy, revealed the historic character of that great event to the world. Gioberti, Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele, Garibaldi, and all those patriots who labored at the very foundation of the new kingdom were, in that sense, Mazzinians.[3] The entire Risorgimento was Mazzinian, not only in terms of the political forces in act, but in all the forms of the spiritual life of Italians, in which the influence of Mazzinianism matured independently of his writings and enjoinments. Writers of the first rank, like Manzoni and Rosmini, who had no historic relationship with Mazzini, shared the same traits, and on convergent paths, pursued the same end: to plant a conviction in souls—a conviction that life is not what it is, but what it ought to be; and only that life is worthy of

[2] See Giuseppe Mazzini, *The Duties of Man and Other Essays* (London: J. M. Dent, 1912) and Bolton King, *The Life of Mazzini* (London: J. M. Dent, 1914).

[3] See Gentile's treatment of the thought of the Risorgimento, with its emphasis on that of Giuseppe Mazzini. Gentile, *Albori della nuova Italia: Varietà e documenti* (Lanciano: Carabba, 1923), Parts 1 and 2.

being lived which is as it ought to be, with all its duties and difficulties, requiring always efforts of the will, abnegation, and hearts disposed to suffer in order to make possible the good—an anti-materialistic and essentially religious conviction.[4] One can run through the series of the writers and thinkers of the time. There is not a single materialist among them—not one who does not sense the religious character of life—who, irrespective of the political contrasts found between national aspirations and the dogmas and exigencies of the [Roman Catholic] Church, did not acknowledge, in some fashion, the necessity of reinvigorating the religious sentiment and revive in souls that faith, which for Italians had become no more than a formal and mechanical externality. Even Giuseppe Ferrari (who might be considered the exception) confirms the truth of the judgment—he who ultimately found himself in absolute solitude, opposed not only by Gioberti and the moderates, but by Mazzini himself. Ferrari was a restless, turbid, contradictory, inconclusive spirit, formidable in the brilliant quality of his genius and his vast culture, inept in his destructiveness, and incapable of construction.

The religion of Gioberti is not that of Rosmini, nor that of Manzoni. That of Mazzini is not that of Tommaseo, to compare spirits that shared affinities. Between Cavour and Ricasoli, who both keenly sensed the gravity of the religious problem—as a problem for both the individual and as a political problem for the new Italy—the difference is even greater. One of the thinkers more versed in religious matters is Lambruschini—who is studied even today with much interest for the freshness and profundity of his religious ideas, remains a solitary figure. In effect, one cannot speak of an Italian religious movement during the first half of the nineteenth century—a movement that had a character and a program, in which many participated. Nonetheless, at the bottom of all the variety of ideas and tendencies, there was a shared basis—a faith in the reality and the power of the ideal principles that govern the world. [It was a faith in which there was] a common opposition to materialism. That was the general character of the time. That was the ground on which everyone met and could agree or disagree.[5]

[4] See Gentile, *Rosmini e Gioberti: Saggio storico sulla fi losofi a italiana del Risorgimento* (Florence: Sansoni, 1958).

[5] See the entire discussion in Gentile, *Le origini della fi losofi a contemporanea in Italia* (Messina: Giuseppe Principato, 1917) in three parts.

3 - THE WANING OF THE RISORGIMENTO AND THE REIGN OF UMBERTO I

That religious and idealistic conception of life, which formed the basis of the national patriotic conscience of the Risorgimento, dominated and governed the spirit of Italians until its exhaustion as an historic movement. It was the atmosphere in which one breathed not only during the heroic times until the proclamation of the new Kingdom with Cavour, but also afterwards, in the period of the diadochi, from Ricasoli to Lanza, Sella, Minghetti, until the occupation of Rome and the establishment of the finances of the State,[6] until the time that the work appeared complete, the Risorgimento concluded, and the moment when the people of Italy, having become a nation through severe trials and hard discipline, were to be launched to democratically and freely develop their inherent economic and moral forces. The parliamentary change of 1876 signaled, if not the end, the arresting of the process with which Italy began the century—with that spirit we have attempted to describe.[7]

The process was changed. It was changed not through caprice, confusion, or the weakness of persons, but as an historical necessity, that it would be foolish, today, to deplore. Rather, it behooves us to understand what transpired. It seems that liberty had been conquered, because from 1861 through 1876, Italian politics was directed by the Right, which was scrupulously concerned with statutory liberty—but which conceived liberty in a manner distinct from the Left. The Left moved from the individual to the State; the Right from the State to the individual. Those of the Left conceived the people—for a variety of reasons, and according to their origins and their different intellectual development—as the same as the citizens of which the "people" are composed. The Left made the individual the center and the basis of rights and initiatives—that any regime of liberty was required to respect and guarantee. The persons of the Right, on the other hand, as the result of various tendencies and modes of thinking, were firm and in agreement concerning the notion that one could not speak of liberty without speaking of the State. A serious liberty with important content could not obtain other than within the sound organism of a State, whose sovereignty would be the indestructible foundation of all its

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[6] Gentile always capitalized the term "State." That practice will be followed throughout the translations.

[7] See the account of the period provided by Alfredo Oriani, *La lotta politica in Italia* (Rocca San Casciano: Cappelli, 1956), Books 8 and 9. Gentile approved of Oriani's account. See Mussolini's assessment of Oriani's work in his "Preface" to Alfredo Oriani, *La rivolta ideale* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1943), pp. iii-v.

activities. The [State was understood to be the arena in which the] play of the interests of individuals is conducted. They possess no liberty worthy of mention that is not compatible with the security and authority of the State. The general interest is always to be given priority against any particular interest—to thereby absolutely and irresistibly endow the life of the people with value. A convincing concept, but not without dangers. Applied without regard to the motives out of which the opposed concept of the Left arises, and appears justified, it can result in stasis, immobility—and therefore in the annihilation of the life which the State embodies in itself and disciplines in the organic substance of its relations, but which it must not, nor can, suppress. [Only a State that responds to the considerations out of which the concepts of the Left emerge can remain vital and progressive. If the State fails to respond to those considerations] it becomes a form indifferent to content, alien to the things it must regulate; it becomes mechanical, and threatens to overwhelm those things with which it must deal.

The individual, in turn, who does not find the law within himself, does not become one with the State and opposes the State and the law. He senses the law as a limit, as a constraint, that would suffocate him should he not be able to free himself. That was the feeling of those of 1876. The people of the nation required more breathing space. Moral, economic, and social forces needed to develop without being further confined by a law that was not understood. That was the cause of the political change. From there our new nation entered into a period of growth and development—economic (industrial, commercial, rail transport, financial, and agricultural), as well as intellectual (scientific and scholarly), development. All to the credit of the reign of Umberto

The nation that had received, as from on high, a form, arose, and made every effort to lift itself to a higher level, giving to the State that had already crafted its statutory codes, its administrative and political institutions, its army and its finances, a living content of real forces. Those forces grew out of the enterprise, both individual and collective, that were put in motion by the interests that the Risorgimento—all caught up in the grandeur of the political purpose to be attained—had not satisfied.

The most important minister of King Umberto, Crispi, aggressively sought to stop that movement of growth, to raise once again the flag of idealism—even religion—that he had been given in his youth by Mazzini, himself. He revealed a misunderstanding of his time, and fell before the violent reaction that the so-called democracy unleashed against his effort.

It was necessary, for the time being, to fold away the old and glorious banner. One was not to speak of wars, nor of anything that might signify and require national pride and consciousness of a program to be undertaken in competition with the Great Powers. One was not to dream of assuming any pretense of being on the level of the Great Powers or their proper equal. It was enough to participate in discussions with them, and return content that one's hands remained unsullied [by the acquisition of territory or resources so common among the "powers" at the end of the nineteenth century.] One was not to think of limiting individual liberty in the interests of that abstract and metaphysical entity that was called the State. One was not to call upon God (as Crispi was wont to do). One must allow the popular classes to gradually conquer well being, a sense of self, and enter politics. Education and the battle against illiteracy, together with all the other provisions of social legislation were to be undertaken. The removal of Church education and the introduction of secular public schools were sought.[8] There was everywhere and in every way a struggle against long-established and pernicious ecclesiastical influence, and the associations that arose to achieve that goal were to remain in Italy to pursue that end [at the beginning of the twentieth century]. Masonry continually penetrated, expanded, and branched out throughout the national administration and the military, into the magistrature and the schools.[9] The central power of the State was weakened, bent to the attitudes of the popular will by means of universal suffrage and the votes of parliament. That will was increasingly liberated from the limitations of the superior obligations of life.... Less authority, more liberty.

The character of public life was shaped from below. And to increase the impetus and the force, there was socialist propaganda, of Marxist stamp, to which the rise and development of heavy industry opened the way. That was accompanied by a new form of moral education for the working classes and the formation among them of a political consciousness. It was a revolutionary consciousness, together with a sentiment of human solidarity, new to the primitive and unsophisticated psychology of the Italian lower classes. A new discipline came with the associations and federations of classes—but it was a partial and narrow discipline that limited the moral horizon and ruptured the majority of the ligaments with which the human being is

[8] Gentile's reform of education in 1923 restored religious education to the elementary schools in Italy.

[9] Under the Fascist regime, Masonry was to be suppressed; see Alfredo Rocco, "Le leggi di difesa," *La trasformazione dello stato: Dallo stato liberale allo stato Fascista* (Rome: "La Voce," 1927), pp. 35-58.

morally connected to others. More than anything else, it did not allow the social awareness that draws human beings together in the service of interests, sentiments, and thought of a single Fatherland.

For the Left, the bonds that maintain and establish the community, which were conceived as respectable and to be respected, were all rooted in the sentiment that each instinctively has of conquering and defending his own proper well being—a materialistic conception of life against which Mazzini had struggled.[10] It was that conception that Mazzini opposed in socialism—but which he himself recognized was not limited to socialism, but was common to every political conception, liberal as well as antisocialist, that was democratically individualistic—in so far as life was conceived as devoted entirely to the satisfaction of rights rather than the discharge of duties. Liberalism and socialism are both individualistic in so far as both deny a reality superior to that material life which has its measure in the individual. Materialists are always individualists.

The Italy of the Left, from 1876 until the war of 1915-1918 was materialistic and anti-Mazzinian—even though it goes without saying that it was an Italy far superior to the Italy of pre-Mazzinian times. The light of the Risorgimento went out. Other than a few survivors, whose voices lost themselves in the desert, all of culture, in the moral sciences, as well as in the natural sciences, letters, arts, and education, was dominated by a crude positivism, which even when it protested that it did not wish to deal with metaphysics—seeking to remain in agnostic reserve—lapsed into materialism, conceiving reality as a finished something that limited and conditioned the lives of human beings, and which ultimately dominated them beyond every exigency and moral pretext. Morality was considered arbitrary and illusory. Everyone spoke of facts, of positive things. They ridiculed metaphysics and any reality that might be intangible. The truth was in the facts. One needed only to open one's eyes to see the mirror of truth in nature. Of God, it was said, it was better not to speak. Concerning the soul one might speak but only to conceive it as a physiological phenomenon which one might well observe. Patriotism—like all the other virtues that have their origins in religion, concerning which one could no longer speak unless one was prepared to speak with gravity—became simply an issue of inflated speech, which one ought to have the good taste not to consider.[11]

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[10] See Giuseppe Mazzini, "To the Italian Working Class" and "To The Italians," *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, pp. 1-3, 221-247.

[11] See the account of Ardigò, one of the principal positivists of the period, Giovanni Marchesini, *Roberto Ardigò: L'uomo e l'umanista* (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1922).

This—as it remains in the memory of those educated during the last quarter of the nineteenth century—was the spirit of that anti-Mazzinian age, with the exception, once again, of a few faint voices, collected together in a common feeling. It was an age that could be politically designated a demo-socialist phase of the Italian State, because in Italy the democratic mentality found expression in socialism, an imposing and primary force. It was the age, as has been indicated, that filled the entire reign of Umberto I. It was a period of development and prosperity, in which the creative forces of the Risorgimento were overwhelmed and obscured.

4 - IDEALISM, NATIONALISM, AND SYNDICALISM

During the final years of the nineteenth, and in the first three years of the twentieth century, youth found itself enveloped and transported by a new spirit, a forceful reaction to the dominant ideas in politics, literature, science, philosophy, and in the culture of the last quarter of the preceding century. Italy seemed fatigued, repelled by the prosaic, middle-class, materialist life that it endured. It was eager to return to its origins, to the ideas, the high aspirations, and the great moral forces that had given Italy birth. At the turn of the century, Rosmini and Gioberti had been generally forgotten. They survived only in cults having few adepts. Their books were rarely found in the bookstalls and among used bookdealers. Their names were barely spoken by scholars who had pretensions of being current. [By the first decade of the new century, however,] they returned with honor, and around their doctrines a new literature began to arise that saw in their thought something of great permanent value. The royal government itself decreed the publication of a national edition of the works of Mazzini. There was a return to the study of his life and writing, not only as a matter of historical interest but also as a source of instruction that could no longer be overlooked. Vico, the great Giambattista Vico,[12] the philosopher of the highest speculative national tradition, the formidable advocate of the anti-Cartesian idealist and spiritual idealist philosophy, was once again passionately studied together with other national thinkers. Italians could sense and reconstruct an autonomous and elevating consciousness of the proper personality of the nation. More recent writers (Spaventa, De Sanctis), who were not able, in life, to break through the resistance of those too obtuse to recognize the idealistic needs and the intimate intelligence of life and art, returned in honor, were republished, read, and universally studied.

Positivism, as it found expression in its major and minor representatives, was refuted—it was opposed, rejected, and satirized in all its forms. Materialistic methods of study in literature and art were fought, and discredited. The doors of Italian culture were opened to new ideas—ideas which, even beyond the Alps, substituted themselves for positivism and naturalism. The old Roman Catholic conscience was shaken, reawakened, and revived by the modernist movement that had been born in countries possessed of a more vital ecclesiastical culture.[13] It found ardent agents among young priests who, participating in the critical studies of the history of Christianity and the

[12] See Gentile, *Studi vichiani* (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1927).

[13] See Gentile, *Il modernismo e i rapporti fra religione e fi losofi a* (Florence: Sansoni, 1962).

philosophic studies in which the movement found its origin, awakened among Italian clerics the need of a culture more modern and profound. They took effective part in religious controversies and struggles. They succeeded in bringing to light problems that had long remained in the shadow for Italians. Orthodox Catholics, modernist Catholics, and non-Catholics saw those problems with new eyes and more sensibility.

In the renewed philosophic and critical spirit, socialism itself no longer appeared to be a finished doctrine to be accepted as dogma. It was rather seen as a doctrine, like every other, that would have to be studied in its essence and structure. Italian scholars gave themselves over to the example and guide of the French, who had been dogmatic adherents of Marxism. Together, both the Italians and the French reviewed Marxism's weaknesses and errors. When Georges Sorel, as a consequence of that critique, defeated that materialistic theory of the German social democratic epigones of Karl Marx—and advocated syndicalism—young Italian socialists turned to him, and found in syndicalism two things: (1) the rejection of that strategy of foolish and deceptive collaboration of socialism with the parliamentary democracy of the liberal State. In so doing, socialism succeeded only in betraying the proletariat as well as the liberal State. (2) [As opposed to standard socialism, the proletariat found in syndicalism] a faith in a moral reality, exquisitely ideal (or "mythic," as was said at the time), for which one would be prepared to live, die, and sacrifice oneself, even to the point of using violence whenever violence was necessary to destroy an established order to create another. It was an anti-parliamentarian and moral faith that transformed the conscience of workers in syndicates, and made of the socialist theory of duties a Mazzinian conception of life as apostolic obligation.[14]

Another idea suggested by French culture—that had enormous impact on the youth of Italy and thereby penetrated deeply into the community, particularly among intellectuals, and which profoundly reformed political thought—was nationalism. Less literary and more political in Italy because closer to a political current that had an immense importance—the traditional Right—around which Italian

[14] In this context see the exposition of Curzio Malaparte when he wrote as "the most formidable pen of Fascism," in Curzio Malaparte, "L'Europa vivente," in *L'Europa vivente e altri saggi politici (1921-1931)* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1961). In terms of the Fascist conception of revolutionary violence, see the exposition in Sergio Panunzio, *Diritto, forza e violenza: Lineamenti di una teoria della violenza* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1921); for a discursive account of Panunzio's views, see A. James Gregor, "Some Thoughts on State and Rebel Terror," in David C. Rapoport and Yonah Alexander (eds.), *The Rationalization of Terrorism* (Frederick, MD.: Aletheia Books, 1982), pp. 56-66. For comparative purposes, see Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1961).

Nationalism collected itself, emphasizing the ideal of the Nation and the Fatherland. It was emphasized in a form, as we shall see, that was not entirely acceptable to the traditional Right. The new form had to be forthcoming; one which advanced the conviction to which the Right had remained committed: to the State as the foundation in which the value and right of citizens was anchored. Nationalism, whatever the case, was a new faith lit in the Italian soul, thanks to which the Fatherland was no longer spoken of with socialist derision. The courage was mustered to resist the arrogance of socialists—that the liberals of various democratic persuasions found irresistible. Nationalism had another virtue: that of openly and boldly raising objections to that Masonry before which everyone in the Italian bourgeoisie had timidly prostrated themselves—save the Roman Catholics, who had directly opposed it. The anti-Masonic battles fought are among the signal honors of Italian Nationalism.

Masonry, parliamentary socialism, more or less reformist and democratic, became the common targets of the syndicalists, the Nationalists and the idealists: bound in a common cultural ideal and in a common conception of life. They had returned in unison, consciously or not, to a religious and idealistic Mazzinian conception. Separated by many of the articles of their special programs, they were nonetheless united and committed in that fundamental concept. They sought to infuse a consciousness of renewal and a vigorous sentiment of opposition among the youth [of Italy] against the prevailing culture and politics. During the first fifteen years of the century there was a ferment in newspapers, magazines, in the publications of the new publishing houses, and among the youth groups that had begun to organize. There was an emergence of new growth, of new forces, that turned to the remote past to recall to life the energy that would sustain hope for the future. They were innovators who made recourse to tradition. They were polemicists, sometimes violent, who advocated a system of order and restoration of ideal forces, in which everyone would have to subject themselves to the discipline of law. They appeared reactionary to the radicals, to the super-liberals of a democracy influenced by Masonry, and to the reformists of socialism. They were, rather, the heralds of the future.

Official Italy, legal and parliamentary, was opposed to them. The Italy of post-World War One had as its leader a person who possessed a secure intuition of collective psychology, an expert in the vices and virtues of the entire political and administrative mechanism in which anti-Mazzinian and anti-idealistic Italy had established and secured itself. He was skeptical or indifferent to high ideals, a simplifier of all the great questions, and a simplifier in terms of

solutions. He was ironic, incapable of enthusiasm and grand affirmations for himself or for the nation that he was obligated to faithfully serve. He was a positive person, practical, crafty—a materialist in the Mazzinian sense.

The two antithetical currents that characterized pre-World War One Italy were identified with the names of Mazzini and Giolitti. The crisis that arose out of their mutual opposition was to be resolved only with the war. Only then was Italy to be freed of that dualism that wounded and paralyzed it—to create a unified soul and produce the consequent ability to act and to live.

5 - THE POST-WAR PROSTRATION AND THE RETURN OF [GIOVANNI] GIOLITTI

From the very beginning, the effect of the war was not what had been expected. The end of the state of war in 1918, released the people of Italy from the limitations and constraints of wartime discipline—releasing them to the freedom of normal circumstances. The right to free and open expression of their intentions was restored. Given the latitude made available by the renewal of parliamentary and popular liberty, the political and juridical order felt the weight of the popular will. Under that weight, the State gave evidence of unraveling—together with the moral forces that provided it support. Popular sentiment seemed to support the position of those who did not want Italy to enter the war—those who had done everything possible to impede that eventuality. It seemed that those so disposed were prepared to further test the already sorely tried nation and the limits of the State's strength. Popular sentiment seemed to argue that it had been unreasonable, arbitrary, and foolhardy to commit a young and poor people, not yet united as a national community, and without a military tradition, to the arduous challenge of international conflict. The socialists considered the expression of that sentiment a confirmation of their original position with respect to the war. They intoned hymns of victory and triumph. They felt that their resistance to Italy's participation in the Great War had been justified and the truth of their judgments demonstrated by the facts. At the end of the war, Italy's allies had turned their backs on her, minimizing Italy's sacrifice and the value of its contribution to the Allied victory. For Italy, justice would not be forthcoming.

There were Italians who perversely took pleasure in the frustration of the hopes of those who advocated intervention. They were not disturbed—as right reason would seem to dictate—by foreign malevolence. They seemed rather to welcome the abuse. There was an increasing appeal to democratic ideology toward which there had been far too much indulgence during the war. The intervention of the United States in 1917 brought with it the acceptance of a democratic ideology of the worst kind, that of Woodrow Wilson.

The Italian victory in the Great War was thus transformed into a defeat; and a sense of defeat diffused itself among the people of the nation: hatred of the war and of those responsible for Italy's participation in it. That hatred extended to the military that had served as an instrument in that war. There was hatred of that system that had made the war possible at all, by making Parliament (and what a Parliament it was!) unable to oppose it. In fact, the sentiment against

the war was so emphatic that a minister of the monarch was found who proposed that the lower house of Parliament abrogate Article 5 of the Statuto, thereby making the declaration of war a prerogative, not of the King, but of the Head of the Government [the first minister]. With the unleashing of those singularly materialistic anti-national passions, there was diffused throughout the nation, together with an arch discontent, an anarchic disposition to undermine authority itself. The ganglia of economic life appeared thoroughly impaired. Work stoppage followed work stoppage. Its very bureaucracy opposed the State. Public services ceased or were disorderly. A lack of faith in the action of the government, and in the force of law, grew day by day. A sense of revolution permeated the atmosphere which the weak ruling class felt impotent to resist. Ground was gradually ceded and accommodations made with the leaders of the socialist movement.

The specter of Bolshevism loomed as a terrible menace. Giolitti—that execrated Giolitti of the beginning of the war, the "man of Dronero," who throughout the war was gradually forgotten by Italians, or who was remembered only as an exponent of that Italy that had died with the war—resurfaced. He was invoked as a savior. Under him, however, there was sedition among the employees of the State and the occupation of the factories by workers; the very economic organism of the administration of the State was mortally wounded. Those who had inflicted the wounds were treated with diplomacy—an open confession of the State's debility. Had Giolitti, thanks to the consequences of the war, triumphed over Mazzini?

6 - MUSSOLINI AND THE FASCI DI COMBATTIMENTO

Under the government of Giolitti, however, the circumstances changed, and against the Giolittian State there arose others who were authentic opponents, those who had willed the war and had consciously fought it—those who on the fields of battle believed in the sanctity of sacrifice. On those battlefields more than a half million lives were immolated for an idea. It was they who felt how great a crime it would be if all that bloodshed would one day be seen as having been in vain (as their opponents anticipated). It was they who sought to kindle in the hearts of Italians, and in Italian history, the glory of the victory consecrated by the sacrifice. Among them were those magnificent men who had been mutilated, who had seen death up close, and who, more than other survivors, felt possessed of the right conferred on them by those many, many thousands, who had made the supreme sacrifice, to watch and judge the living. They, the mutilated and the dead, awaited that Italy for which they had been called upon to sacrifice and for which they had given their limbs and lives. They were Mazzinians, in effect, who had wanted the war, and who had gone to war, before all the others. They provided spiritual guidance and prompted faith in the youth of Italy. They found a powerful voice that gave precise expression, nobly and energetically, to their convictions, unconquered by the disillusionment and prevailing meanness of spirit. They found a man who spoke for all, who spoke above the tumult, and who made those listen who sought not to allow the precious heritage of the war to be lost. He was a man who understood how to speak to the heart, who roused and mobilized all the passions invoked by bloody trenches and victorious combat. [Those heroes of the war] saw shining as from a distant height, a burning will: that of Benito Mussolini.

Benito Mussolini had emerged from Italian socialism in 1915 in order to become a more faithful interpreter [of the will of] the people of Italy, to whom he, already editor of the socialist paper, Avanti!, wished to devote his new journal, Il popolo d'Italia. He argued for the necessity of the war, for [Italy's entry into] which he was among those truly responsible. Just as he had struggled against Masonry while a socialist, inspired by Sorellian syndicalism, he opposed the parliamentary corruption of reformism with the idealistic postulates of revolution and violence in the name of revolution. Outside the ranks of official socialism, he continued his battle against his old comrades, defending the rationale of the war, defending the infrangible moral and economic wholeness of the national organism, against the lying fictions of internationalism. He argued for the sanctity of the

Fatherland—[something that would be sacred] even for the working classes. He was a Mazzinian with the sincerity that Mazzinianism always found in Romagna. He had already transcended the ideology of socialism—first by instinct and then by reflection. Having passed through a painful and troubled youth, rich with experiences and meditation, he had nurtured himself with the most recent [anti-positivist and anti-materialist] culture of Italy. [He gave himself over to the concept of] that great Italy, which he—together with all those young men who, throughout the war—longed for and passionately loved. All had grown with the new ideas of the century, and in the new faith in the ideal—against the demagogic and anarchist velleities of those socialists who preached revolution with neither the force nor the will to undertake it. [Those failed socialists were persons who] even on the most propitious occasions failed to recognize the necessity of assuring the most essential condition for the existence of a nation: a State form that would be truly a State, with a law to be respected, with an authority that made itself respected, possessed of a worth that would legitimate that authority. A nation—that was capable of sustaining a war that was in every way arduous, long, and bloody—a nation continuously victor over itself, tenacious in controlling the forces in act, making sacrifices in the constancy of a faith perpetually renewed, irrespective of deficiencies, disappointments, and tremendous reversals, achieving victory, in effect, through its own virtue—could be thrown into disorder and degradation without the respect and authority required by the State. The debasement of the State was accomplished by a few men like Treves, Turati, and their like—men without faith, political aesthetes, with all the brilliant culture of journalists, together with arid and empty hearts. On the 23rd of March of 1919, in Milan, at the site of Mussolini's newspaper, Il popolo d'Italia, the first Fascio di Combattimento was founded. In response to the will of its Leader—the destructive and negative post-war movement [in Italy] was soon to be halted. The Fascists called together those Italians who—the disappointments and the anguish that came with peace notwithstanding—continued to have faith in what the war, and what the victory in that war, meant. They sought to restore Italy to itself, through the reestablishment of discipline and the reordering of social and political forces within the State. Fascism was not an association of believers, but a party of action, that had need not of programs of particulars, but of an idea, that indicated a goal, and thereby a way to be followed with a resolute will—that refused to acknowledge obstacles, because ready to overcome them.

Was that will revolutionary? Yes, because it anticipated the construction of a new State.

7 - REDEMPTION

The twenty-third of March 1919 was the date when the redemptive counteroffensive began—when out of Milan a cry was raised that awakened the spirit of the veterans who had wanted the war and who had fought it—who had sensed its value, and who had faith in their idea, notwithstanding the frustrations of a peace that was neither glorious nor just, and notwithstanding the vile spectacle of an ignorant people swept up in the arrogance of skeptics. The skeptics had been negative on the eve of the war; they opposed the war during the long, dark, and anxious days of trial, and they denied it, with malign smiles, after victory bore little fruit and reward. After the victory, they continued to maintain that the carnage was pointless, and those who had willed the war were to be deplored, scorned, and persecuted. Those who had worked for the victory were despised and derided. The spirit of the nation was prostrate. The consciousness of the sanctity of the nation—of the will that governed it, of the law that was its essence and which took form in a living person—was lost. The least noble passions of humankind were released and stirred. A revolution threatened that was without ideas or energy. It had bred during the long postwar inertia—like disease bacteria—that undermined the living body from within. It was a potential revolution without the strength of revolution, without the ability to destroy in order to create. It was a negative revolution. It was said that it was Bolshevik—but it was worse than Bolshevik. Against that revolution the veterans arose, mobilized by that powerful cry that in 1915 had given expression to their faith and had nourished it thereafter. They collected themselves in Fasci, associations that quickly multiplied throughout the nation.

And those associations made a revolution: a revolution that was possessed of an idea, a will, and a Leader. It had all begun with the war, declared in a manner that had already mortally wounded the Parliament, reducing to rubble the legal objections that obstructed the realization of the profound national will of a people who sought the dignity and power of their nation.

That revolution was undertaken and pursued with energy until the goal was attained. The illegalities of the four-year period (1919-1922) constituted the necessary condition for the manifestation of the national will—until the 28th of October 1922, when the old State was brushed aside by the impetus of the new youthful faith, and the Fasci became the new Italy.

From that day, the new nation reconstructed itself, because that powerful cry had by that time awakened all Italians, and animated and guided them in their arduous labor.

8 - SQUADRISM

The four year period 1919-1922 was characterized, in the development of the Fascist revolution, by the deployment of Fascist squads. The action squads were the military force of a virtual State. [They were the military arm of a State] in the process of realizing itself—which in order to create a superior regime, violated the controlling laws of a moribund State system—understood as inadequate to the demands of the national State sought by the revolution. The March on Rome of the 28th of October 1922 was not the beginning, but the conclusion of that revolutionary movement, which on that date, with the consequent constitution of the Mussolini ministry, assumed full legality. From that point, Fascism, as the directive idea of the State, underwent evolution, slowly creating the institutions necessary for its actuation and its investment of all the economic, juridical, and political arrangements which make up the State, and which the State guarantees.

After the 28th of October 1922, Fascism no longer confronted a State that was to be destroyed; Fascism became the State and proceeded against those internal factions that opposed and resisted the development of those Fascist principles that were expected to animate the new State. Fascism was no longer a revolution against the State, but a revolutionary State mobilized against the residue and internal debris that obstructed its evolution and organization. The period of violence and revolutionary illegality had ended—although the activity of the squads continued for a time to flicker here and there—in spite of the iron discipline imposed by the Duce of Fascism and Head of the Government. Mussolini sought to have reality conform to the logic that governed the development of his idea and that of the Party that incarnated that idea. Fascism possessed all the means necessary for reconstruction: it transformed its own illegal action squads into the legal voluntary militia—in which the spirit of the revolution would be maintained until the fulfillment of the revolutionary program.[15] The Party was established in an inflexible and perfect hierarchy obedient to the intentions of its Leader, and was rendered an instrument of government action, ready, with spirit, to face the test. The Italy of Giolitti was finally overcome, at least in the realm of armed politics. Between Giolitti and the new Italy—the Italy of the combat veterans, of the Fascists, and believing Mazzinians—flowed a river of blood. That torrent barred the way to anyone who advocated turning back.

[15] This was one form of the armed political party that characterizes one category of revolutionary parties. The Nazi SS was another form. The Red Army, and the People's Liberation Army, still others.

The crisis was transcended, and the war began to bear fruit.

9 - THE TOTALITARIAN CHARACTER OF THE DOCTRINE OF FASCISM

The history of the Italian spiritual and political crisis and its solution was immanent in the concept of Fascism. How the legislative and administrative actions of the revolutionary government dealt with that crisis is not the present object of discussion. Rather, the present account is intended to illuminate the spirit which the government brought to its activities—which, in five years, profoundly transformed the nation's laws, orders, and institutions—thereby revealing the essence of Fascism.

It has already been said that before the complexity of the movement, nothing is more instructive for understanding it than, as we have already indicated, to consider Mazzini.[16] His conception was a political conception—a conception of integral politics, a notion of politics which does not distinguish itself from morality, from religion, or from every conception of life that does not conceive itself distinct and abstracted from all other fundamental interests of the human spirit. In Mazzini, the political man is he who possesses a moral, religious, and philosophical doctrine. Should one endeavor to separate, in Mazzini's creed and in his propaganda, that which is merely political from that which is his religious, his ethical intuition, moral enjoinments, his metaphysical convictions, one can no longer account for the great historical importance of his belief system and his propaganda. One can no longer understand the reasons why Mazzini attracted so many to himself—and proceeded to disturb the sleep of so many men of State and of the police. The analysis that does not always presuppose a unity [at the base of Mazzini's thought], does not lead to a clarification, but rather to a destruction of those ideas that exercised such historic consequences. It is evidence that human beings do not deal with life in slices, but rather as an indivisible unity.

The first point, therefore, that must be established in a definition of Fascism, is the totalitarian character of its doctrine, which concerns itself not only with political order and direction of the nation, but with its will, thought and sentiment.

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[16] In this context, see Gentile, "Mazzini e la Nuova Italia," "Risorgimento e Fascismo," and "Il pensiero italiano del secolo XIX," in *Memorie italiane e problem della fi losofi a e della vita* (Florence: Sansoni, 1936), pp. 23-42, 115-120, 221-244.

10 - THOUGHT AND ACTION

The second point. The doctrine of Fascism is not a philosophy in the ordinary sense of the term, and still less is it a religion. It is also not an explicated and definitive political doctrine, articulated in a series of formulae. The truth is that the significance of Fascism is not to be measured in the special theoretical or practical theses that it takes up at one or another time. As has been said at its very commencement, it did not arise with a precise and determinate program. Often, having settled on an immediate goal to be attained, a concept to be realized, a course to be followed, it has not hesitated, when put to the test, to change direction and reject as inadequate, or violative of principle, just that goal or that concept. Fascism sought not to bind the future. It has often announced reforms that were politically opportune, but the announcement itself did not bind the regime to their execution. The real commitments of the Duce are always those that are formulated and undertaken at one and the same time. For that reason Mussolini has always considered himself a "tempist," that is to say a person who undertakes a solution and acts at that proper moment in which action finds all the conditions and reasons mature that render the action possible and opportune. Fascism draws out of the Mazzinian truth, thought and action, its most rigorous significance, identifying the two terms in order to have them perfectly coincide, no longer to attribute any value to thought that is not translated or expressed in action. That is the source of all the expressions of "anti-intellectualist" polemics that constitutes one of Fascism's most recurrent themes. It is a polemic that is eminently Mazzinian, because "intellectualism" [as "intellectualism" is understood by Fascists] divorces thought from action, science from life, the brain from the heart, and theory from practice. It is the posture of the talker and the skeptic, of the person who entrenches himself behind the maxim that it is one thing to say something and another thing to do it; it is the utopian who is the fabricator of systems that will never face concrete reality; it is the talk of the poet, the scientist, the philosopher, who confine themselves to fantasy and to speculation and are ill-disposed to look around themselves and see the earth on which they tread and on which are to be found those fundamental human interests that feed their very fantasy and intelligence. "Intellectuals" are all those who represent that old Italy. They were the enemy of Mazzini's heated preachments.

Anti-intellectualism does not mean, as some ignorant Fascists seem to believe, that they are authorized by the Duce to dismiss science and philosophy. It does not mean that one denies the value of thought and those superior expressions of culture through which

thought expresses itself. Spiritual reality is a synthesis, in whose unity one finds expression and value in that thought that is action. In the conclusive unity of that synthesis converge, and must converge, and know that they converge, many elements without which the synthesis would be empty, operating in a void. Among these elements are all the forms of spiritual activity, which share in the same value which is that of the synthesis. All the elements of the synthesis are essential. One does not rout armies that threaten the Fatherland with trigonometry—but without trigonometry one cannot target artillery. Anti-intellectualism is directed against those human beings who exhaust their spiritual life in an abstract and remote intellectual activity, far from that reality, in which everyone should realize that human existence is rooted. Anti-intellectualism is opposed to those postures that are sometimes assumed that miss superior, more concrete, more humane alternatives. The adversary that first of all is to be defeated is that adversary found among those that are mentally, morally, and historically, typical of that cultivated Italian class, that have been identified for centuries as literati. That would include not only authors and cultivators of literature, but every writer, even those writing about science and philosophy, even those who would occupy themselves with liberal studies—that is to say, even those disinterested and nonprofessional—academics, who are erudite, scholars, who would not involve themselves in politics, in real matters, those who would not involve themselves in the practical world. Such persons are the bastard product of our Risorgimento—whom Fascists justly consider bad citizens—the products of a growth which Fascists seek to extirpate.

Such an anti-intellectualism does not imply a hostility to culture, but a hostility to a decadent culture. It is hostile to that culture that does not educate and which does not make, but rather unmakes, the person, rendering him a pedant, an intellectual aesthete. The person is rendered an egoist, a man morally and therefore politically indifferent—one who considers himself superior to the fray, even when the struggle involves his Fatherland—even when interests that should win because their triumph signals the victory of his own and the defeat of enemies. Human beings make progress by dividing themselves through victory in battle and in the success of the one above the other. Woe to those who do not participate in the service of either side, and fail to commit themselves, remaining aloof, conceiving duty to be that of a spectator, awaiting an outcome and taking advantage of it, at the close of a conflict, waiting to partake of the fruits of the victor. The intellectualist sees the summit of wisdom in achieving that state of apathy in which one can consider the pros and

cons of everything, extinguishing every passion, finding a place where he might watch, with security, those who suffer and die. But that is the epicurean ideal. All of human history opposes itself to that kind of epicureanism. Human history, heavy with everything we hold dear, in which, and for which, we live, is strewn with trials.

Because of its repugnance to that kind of intellectualism, Fascism is not enamored of tarrying in the making of abstract theories—not because it does not allow the making of theory, but because it does not expect theory to serve as a major force for the reform or the promotion of Italian culture and life. On the other hand, when it is said that Fascism is not a system or a doctrine, one must not imagine that Fascism is empty of reason, is blind practice, or a method that is indefinable or instinctive. Rather, if one defines as system or philosophy something alive, as a principle of universal character in its very development, a principle capable of revealing, as it develops literally day by day, its creativity together with the results and consequences of which it is capable, Fascism is a perfect system, with a most steadfast principle possessed of a rigorous logic of development. The Duce himself, together with the most humble member of the Party, recognizing the truth and the vitality of that principle, labor for its development, now moving with security along the direct route to the goal, and at other times making and unmaking, now moving forward and at other times returning to the beginning out of commitment to the logic of development—because some effort revealed itself as failing to accord itself with principle.

In that sense—as an open system dynamically capable of development there is philosophy in every great body of thought, be it a political or social revolution, or a religious reform, or as a moral or critical literary movement. In this sense, the thought of Mazzini is a philosophy, as is the thought of Manzoni, as is that of Pascal as well as Goethe, Leopardi, and as is the thought of Byron or Shelley.[17]

None of these belong to the proper history of philosophy, but each belongs to a philosophical current, and they reject all that which deviates or contradicts it. If one fails to understand this, one could not identify or evaluate Fascism. One might consider Fascism a method, more than a philosophical system, because in ordinary language the term system is understood to mean a developed doctrine containing theories fixed in propositions or theorems to which nothing can be added and nothing subtracted. Nothing could be more alien to Fascism than those philosophic or religious doctrines which implicitly entail the rise of a school or sect, with adepts and heretics.

[17] In this context, see Gentile, *Manzoni and Leopardi: Saggi critici* (Milan: Treves, 1928).

11 - THE CENTER OF THE SYSTEM

The third point. The Fascist system is not a system, but has in politics, and in the interest of politics, its center of gravity. Born as a conception of the State, intended to resolve the political problems exacerbated in Italy by the release of the passions of the unthinking masses of the post-World War I period, Fascism took the field as a political method. But in the act of confronting and resolving political problems, Fascism, in accordance with its very nature, by its very method, posed for itself moral, religious, and philosophical problems—and, in so doing, developed and demonstrated its specific totalitarian character. That provided the occasion for putting the political form of its principle to the fore. In manifesting that principle, Fascism revealed its specific content—without immediately revealing its ideal origins in a more profound intuition of life, from which the political principle arises. This allows us to outline a rapid synthesis of the political doctrine of Fascism, which does not exhaust its content, but which constitutes that part, or better that preeminent, and generally most interesting, expression.

12 - THE FASCIST DOCTRINE OF THE STATE

Fascist politics turns entirely on the concept of the national State—a concept which has many points of contact with the doctrine of Nationalism—so many points in fact, that it permitted the fusion of the Nationalist Party with that of Fascism in a single program. Nonetheless, the Fascist concept has its proper character. That cannot be overlooked. Without recognizing that, one would neglect that which is peculiar and characteristic of Fascism. Comparisons are never very generous—still less the one here proposed. Nonetheless, the effort will be undertaken to bring to light the essence of Fascism.

Both Nationalism and Fascism place the State at the very foundation of every individual value and right. For both, the State is not a consequence, but a beginning. The relationship between the individual and the State proposed by Nationalism was the direct antithesis of that advanced by individualistic liberalism and socialism. For Nationalists, the State is conceived as prior to the individual. For liberals and socialists, on the other hand, the individual is understood to be something that precedes the State, who finds in the State something external, something that limits and controls, that suppresses liberty, and that condemns him to those circumstances into which he is born, circumstances within which he must live and die. For Fascism, on the other hand, the State and the individual are one, or better, perhaps, “State” and “individual” are terms that are inseparable in a necessary synthesis.

Nationalism, in fact, bases the State on the concept of the nation—an entity that transcends the will and the personality of the individual because it is conceived as objectively preexistent, independent of the consciousness of individuals. Individuals do not labor to create it. The nation of the Nationalists is something that exists not because of spiritual activity, but as an empirical fact and a datum of nature. The constituent elements that make up the nation are territory or ethnicity—all of the same extrinsic nature, even when they are human in origin, like language, religion, or history. That is because those human elements that combine to create national individuality preexist, and the individual finds them already in existence, until he initiates that moral activity that engages and develops them. Much the same can be said of territory and ethnicity. Naturalism, is the disability that attends the tendentially spiritualistic thrust of Nationalism, and makes of it something inflexible, illiberal, retrograde, and crudely conservative—its least sympathetic element. Before Fascism—with which it was later to assimilate and amalgamate—that flaw made it suspicious and repugnant even to those who politically sympathized

with most of its postulates. On the other hand, it attracted certain mystic-religious attachments that proved to be one of the most effective reasons for the enthusiastic adherence to Nationalist idealism by the youth of Italy and those intellectuals not given to political reflection.

One of the special and conspicuous reflections of naturalism was the monarchial loyalty of the Nationalists. The monarchy was a presupposition for them. The Italian State had been born with its monarchy and by virtue of that, the historic basis that today constitutes Italian nationality includes the monarchy. It is a history that intimately and indissolubly binds a people together. There are the Alps and the Appenines, there is Sicily and Dalmatia, there is the undertaking of The Thousand of Garibaldi, and there is the House of Savoy. With the subtraction of any of these elements, one would no longer have the nation. To agree with that, as one must, is to consent to those elements—to feel them as inseparable from the very personality of being Italian. [For the Nationalists] it is not consciousness, recognizing and feeling the tie or rapport that creates and confers upon them the moral value and the obligation they are due, but it is the natural or historical connection and rapport that preexists, that determines the appropriate consciousness. That consciousness is virtually the product of those preexisting natural elements.

When Fascism sought its own path, on the other hand, it was acutely aware of the tedium and dissatisfaction with the actual political State of the Italian nation. Fascism was not capable of persuading itself that the monarchy could, with a vigorous effort, energetically react to restore the nation to that path clearly designated by the generous sacrifices of the war and by the victory honorably concluded. Fascism could not imagine what roots that monarchy could have, and maintain, in the reality that was the Italy of Vittorio Veneto. For that reason, Fascism did not hesitate to frankly confess a republican tendency. Later, when Vittorio Emanuele refused to invoke that state of siege proposed by the last prime minister of the old regime against the Fascist March on Rome, and chose to resolve the crisis between the old and the new Italy, as in 1915, by assigning power to the new Italy—resolutely violating the customary norms of the parliamentarianism responsible for the grave crisis—that antimonarchical disposition did not impede Mussolini from taking an oath of fealty to the King, thereby breaking definitively, sincerely and logically from republicanism. That signified that Fascism, unlike Nationalism, saw in the monarchy not the past to be respected as an historic fact, but as something alive in the soul, a future to which the spirit turns as to a proper ideal, an ideal that addresses our aspirations,

our needs, our nature.

The monarchy, as with all the determinations of the State, as the State, is not something delivered to us by history; neither is it outside of us. The State is within us, mature, alive and of necessity living and growing and expanding and elevating itself in dignity, and conscious of itself and of its high duties and the grand goals to which it is called, in our will, in our thought, and in our passions. The individual develops and the State develops. The character of the individual consolidates itself, and with that character, the structure, the force, and the efficacy of the State consolidates itself.

Italy's seas, coasts, and mountains seem to acquire more cohesion and integrity as though they were ideas and sentiments. Everything in nature can be divided and disaggregated if it pleases us, or at least does not displease us—and everything can be rendered one and indivisible, if we feel that unity to be necessary. Past history with its memories and traditions, with its vanity and its titles to glory, is reconstituted and finds a place through our interested and fervid spiritual reinvocation. It is the spirit which makes them its own, to support and defend them with its adhesion and vigilant consciousness. The language of our fathers is enjoyed and appropriated—and it revives, being studiously taken in and savored with all its expressive qualities. It had seemed as though all that had preexisted—an hereditary legacy—but in fact it is transfigured in our own personal conquest and in a continuous creation, that would vanish if we failed to understand that we are its author.

13 - THE FASCIST STATE AS A DEMOCRATIC STATE

The Fascist State, therefore, as distinct from the Nationalist State, is an entirely spiritual creation. It is a national State, because from the point of view of Fascism, it is the result of spiritual action rather than a presupposition. The nation is never complete—nor is the State simply the nation in its concrete political form. The State is always in fieri. It is all always in our hands. It is therefore our own immense responsibility.

But this State that realizes itself in the consciousness and will of the individual, rather than being imposed from on high, cannot have the same relationship with the people imagined by Nationalism. They imagined that the State corresponded with the nation, and conceived both as an already existing entity that it was not necessary to create, but which it was only necessary to come to know. That preexisting entity required a ruling class, characteristically intellectual, that sensed that entity, that first required to be known, understood, appraised, and exalted. The authority of the State was not a product, but a presupposition. It could not depend on the people, in fact, the people depended on the State. The authority that the people were required to recognize was the very precondition of life. Without that authority, sooner or later, one would have to acknowledge that survival was not possible. The Nationalist state was aristocratic state, that constructed itself out of the force it inherited from its origin, that made it valued by the masses. The Fascist State, on the other hand, is a popular state, and, in that sense, a democratic State par excellence. The relationship between the State and the individual is not that between it and one or the other citizen, but with every citizen. Every citizen shares a relationship with the State that is so intimate that the State exists only in so far as it is made to exist by the citizen. Thus, its formation is a product of the consciousness of each individual, and thus of the masses, in which the power of the State consists. That explains the necessity of the Fascist Party and of all the institutions of propaganda and education that foster the political and moral ideals of Fascism, so that the thought and the will of the solitary person, the Duce, becomes the thought and the will of the masses. Out of that arises the enormous difficulty in which it is involved, to bring into the Party, and into the institutions created by the Party, all the people—commencing from their most tender years. It is a formidable problem, the solution of which creates infinite difficulty, because it is almost impossible to conform the masses to the demands of an elite Party of vanguard morality. Such a conformity could only happen slowly, through education and reform. Equally difficult is the duality between

governmental action and the action of the Party. As the Party's organization expands almost to the full extent of the State—whatever the effort to consolidate their efforts through the force and unity of discipline, discrepancies remain. The two, however much the effort is made to make their action one through discipline, the danger remained that there would be difficulty, with every initiative and progress—given that all individuals were bound together in a mechanism that, even though encouraged by a single spirit that emanated from the center and proceeded to the periphery, the freedom of movement and autonomy would only slowly languish and disappear.

14 - THE CORPORATIVE STATE

The great social and constitutional reform that Fascism is accomplishing, instituting the corporative syndicalist regime as a substitute for the liberal State, arose out of the very character of the Fascist State. Fascism accepted from Syndicalism the idea of the educative and moral function of the syndicate. But since the intention was to overcome the antithesis between the State and the syndicate, the effort was made to enter the system of syndicates harmoniously into corporations subject to discipline by the State and to thereby give expression to the organic character of the State. In order to give expression to the will of the individual, the organic State must reach him, not as an abstract political individual that the old liberalism supposed—as a featureless atom. The organic State sought to reach the individual as it could only find him, as he in fact is: as a specialized producer whose tasks moved him to associate himself with others of the same category, all belonging to the same unitary economic organism that is the nation. The syndicate, conforming as much as possible to the concrete reality of the individual, renders him valued for what he is in reality—be it in terms of self-consciousness that he gradually achieves, or from the right he has earned as a consequence of a contribution, through the syndicate, to the general interests of the nation.

This major reform remains in process. Nationalism and syndicalism—together with liberalism, itself—had criticized the old representative form of the liberal State and appealed to a system of organic representation to better capture the reality in which citizens are lodged, and would better represent their psychology and provide support for the development of their personality.

The corporative State seeks to approximate itself to the notion of immanence of the State in the individual. That immanence provides for both the strength of the State [because it is identified with the individual] and the liberty of the individual [because the liberty of the individual is found in the liberty of the State]. That concept provides [the rationale] for the ethical and religious values that Fascism has made its own and which the Duce has regularly invoked in his speeches...in the most solemn manner.

15 - LIBERTY, ETHICS AND RELIGION

On one occasion the Duce of Fascism undertook a discussion of the theme: Force or Consensus? concluding that the two terms are inseparable—that the one entails the other—the one incapable of being affirmed without the affirmation of the other. That implies that the authority of the State and the liberty of citizens is an infrangible circle in which authority presupposes liberty and vice versa. Liberty is found only in the State and the State is authority. The State is not an abstraction, an entity that descends from heaven and remains suspended in air above the heads of citizens. Rather, it is all one with the personality of the individual, who for that reason must foster, seek out, and recognize the State, knowing that it is that which he has, himself, fashioned.

Fascism, in truth, does not oppose itself to liberalism as a system of authority against a system of liberty. [It sees itself] rather as a system of true and concrete liberty as opposed to abstract and false liberty. Liberalism commences with the breaking of the circle above indicated—opposing the individual to the State, and liberty to authority. Liberalism seeks a liberty in itself, that confronts the State. It wants a liberty that is the limit of the State, resigning itself to a belief that the State is the (unfortunately inevitable) limit of liberty. These were abstractions and inanities that were the object of criticism within liberalism itself by those liberals of the nineteenth century who valued and anticipated the necessity of a strong State—in the interests of liberty. The merit of Fascism was that it courageously and vigorously opposed itself to the prejudices of contemporary liberalism—to affirm that the liberty proposed by liberalism serves neither the people nor the individual. Moreover, since the corporative State tends to realize, in the most coherent and substantial manner, the unity and comprehensiveness of authority and liberty through a system of representation more genuine and more in correspondence with reality, the new State is more liberal than the old.

Within that circle [of authority and liberty]—unrealizable except in the sphere of individual consciousness which historically developed in association with the productive forces and in the historic tradition of intellectual and moral conquests—the State could not attain the concreteness to which it aspires and of which it has need, if it did not invest in that sphere all its consciousness as a sovereign force not circumscribed by any limit or condition. Otherwise, the State, in the very intimacy of its spirit, would remain suspended in air. Only that is valuable, and lives, that is entirely spirit—omitting nothing. The authority of the State is not subject to negotiation, or compromise, or

to divide its terrain with other moral or religious principles that might interfere in consciousness. The authority of the State has force and is true authority if, within consciousness, it is entirely unconditioned. The consciousness that actuates the reality of the State is consciousness in its totality, with all the elements of which it is the product. Morality and religion, essential elements in every consciousness, must be there, but they must be subordinated to the laws of the State, fused in it, absorbed in it. The human being, who in the profundity of his will, is the will of the State with its synthesis of the two terms of authority and liberty—each acting on the other to determine its development—is the human being who, through that will, slowly solves religious and moral problems. The State, without these determinations and these values, would devolve into a mechanical thing. It would be divested of that value to which it politically pretends.

Aut Caesar, aut nihil.

Out of this arises the exquisitely political character of the relationships between the Fascist State and the Roman Catholic Church. The Italian Fascist State—for reasons already given—one with the mass of Italians, is either not religious, or it is Roman Catholic. It cannot be irreligious, because the absolute value and authority it confers on itself would be incomprehensible without a relationship to a divine Absolute. It would be a religion that had a base, was rooted in, and made sense to, the mass of the people of Italy. That would allow the absolute will of the Fatherland, of which there could only be one, to find expression in a religious sentiment. The alternative would be to stupidly fail to develop that which was already in consciousness, or to arbitrarily introduce into consciousness that which it did not contain. To be a Catholic meant to live in the Church and under its discipline. Therefore, it was a necessity for the Fascist State to recognize the religious authority of the Church; a political necessity, a political recognition, with respect to the realization of the State itself. The ecclesiastical politics of the Italian State must resolve the problem of maintaining its sovereignty, intact and absolute, even before the Church, without casting itself athwart the Catholic consciousness of Italians, nor the Church to which that consciousness is subordinated.

That is a grave problem, since the transcendent conception that rules over the Catholic Church contradicts the immanentist character of the political conception of Fascism—which, as has been said, far from being the negation of liberalism and democracy (which even the leaders of Fascism have regularly repeated for polemical reasons) actually aspires to be the most perfect form of liberalism and

democracy, in conformity with the doctrine of Mazzini, to whose spirit Fascism has returned.

This is the way. A long, harsh, steep way. The Italian people have commenced on the path with a faith, with a passion, that has taken possession of the soul of the crowd, and for which there are no examples in its history. They undertake passage with a discipline never before experienced, without hesitation, without discussion, with eyes only for that person of heroic temper, gifted with those extraordinary and admirable traits of the great leaders of peoples. That Leader advances, secure, surrounded in an aura of myth, almost a person chosen by the Deity, tireless and infallible, an instrument employed by Providence to create a new civilization.

Of that civilization one can divine that which has contingent value specific to Italy—and that which has permanent and universal value.

August 1927

APPENDICES

1 - THE PHILOSOPHY OF FASCISM

Every political conception truly worthy of the name is a philosophy, because it is not possible to isolate its proper object—political life in general, the political life of a determinate people in a determinate time—from other forms of human reality, that ordinarily maintain themselves distinctly from politics. Nor can politics isolate itself from universal reality, historic or natural. It cannot be isolated because man with all his activity, when he is not abstractly considered, is intimately related to all reality. Only in such a relationship can the human being understand himself and find guidance. A self-sufficient politics could not serve. Politics invests everything, as does ethics, with which, in a certain fashion, it identifies itself.

Fascism has a full awareness of that truth—and therefore accentuates the ethical character of the conception that it proposes. And, in spite of the polemics against philosophy with which many Fascist writers content themselves, it does attribute a philosophical significance and a universal application to its affirmations as affirmations of principles—whose consequences are of interest not only to politics in the strict sense, but economy, law, science, art and religion itself—in fact, to every human activity, theoretical or practical.

The suspicion and aversion that many Fascists entertain with respect to philosophy are themselves indications and manifestations of the particular character of Fascist thought. As in many similar cases, they are the polemics of one philosophy against other philosophies. Fascism, in fact, polemicizes against abstract and intellectualistic philosophies (the rejection of intellectualism has become the common feature of Fascist literature)—that is to say, those philosophies that presume to explain life by putting themselves outside of it. The Fascist, on the other hand, conceives philosophy as a philosophy of practice (praxis). That concept was the product of certain Marxist and Sorellian inspirations (many Fascists and the Duce, himself, received their first intellectual education in the school of Marx and Sorel)—as well as the influence of contemporary Italian idealistic doctrines from which Fascist mentality drew substance and achieved maturity. Fascist philosophy is not a philosophy that is thought, it is rather one that is done. It therefore announces and affirms itself not with formulae, but with action. If it does make recourse to formulae, it attributes to them the same value as actions, in so far as they are expected to produce, not empty words, but practical effects.

From this fundamental character of Fascist philosophy derives those qualities that are spoken of as Fascist style—a style of literary expression and a style of practical conduct inspired by an economy and an austerity that would suppress in discourse, as it does in its treatment of facts, every superfluous element, tending to extract from human activity the maximum yield with respect to the superior ends toward which these activities should be directed. With that, the form of the Fascist conception defines itself. It is a form that has a determinate content which turns on the concept of the State—the center of its entire system of thought. The Fascist State may be defined in negative terms, affirming what it is not rather than what it is. That is so because the Fascist State has arisen as antithetical to the socialist and liberal conception. From that antithesis has arisen the energy with which Fascism has articulated its own conception of the State. It is understood that at the bottom of the anti-socialist and anti-liberal battle there was something positive—the ethical conception of the State as an autonomous personality that has its own value and its own ends, subordinating to itself every existence and individual interest, not to suffocate them, but to recognize them only as realizations of the personality of the State, as consciousness, and as will.

It is an anti-individualistic conception, in so far as it affirms a spiritual reality, a reality that is universal—not the result, but the ideal principle and the original source of the concrete life of individuals possessed of moral value. From that concept a form of the authoritarian State can be logically derived. It is an authoritarianism that is—only for those who do not know how to conceive ideas except in their abstraction—the negation of political liberty. Fascist authoritarianism rejects license—which is not liberty at all. Only through the State can liberty be realized, and therefore has never existed except as it manifests itself as the liberty of the State (not of the individual)—that is to say, the liberty of the State that realizes its existence in the better part of the consciousness and will of the citizen. That State is an effective existence. There is no question of being or not being concerning the State. The true State is not a State shaped by laws that are infirm and uncertain, prey to the perplexity and doubt that arises from individual judgment, but an institution animated by an unshakable superior and dominant will.

It is an authoritarian State that does not accept the anarchic liberalism of the individualist—who does not recognize the a priori and immanent necessity of the State. And yet, it is more liberal than the liberal State itself. The Fascist State, having organized and juridical recognized workers' syndicates and employer organizations, intends to adapt its structure to those united syndicates, to draw them

into national corporations, on the way to a system of political representation compatible with the structure of workers' organizations—that is to say, to a system that adapts itself to the immediate concrete conditions of Italy's population, in which one finds the root of popular consciousness. It is a perfection of the representative system which the liberal State could not even imagine. But the national will of Fascism does not derive its political value from fact, but from the idea that informs and explains the history of a people's past and future. The ideal nation—that in the very awareness of its being, incarnates and reveals itself in, and to, few individuals or in a single individual—is more real than the factual nation that might exist, at any given time, in the awareness of ignorant and unknowing multitudes.

The Fascist conception is idealistic and appeals to faith, and celebrates ideal values (family, Fatherland, civilization and the human spirit) as superior to every contingent value. And it proclaims a morality of sacrifice and militancy, in response to which the individual must always be ready to face even death for a reality superior to himself. As a result, Fascism has been moved by its own logic to awaken the religious consciousness of Italians—and seeks to provide for the education of youth in schools and in premilitary institutions, founded and organized in a system that commences in earliest childhood until induction into the military.

1928

2 - THE LAWS OF THE GRAND COUNCIL*

Editor's Note: Gentile's discussion of the law regularizing the constitutional role of the Grand Council of Fascism is instructive in so far as he therein signals the transformation of the liberal, parliamentary, into the totalitarian, single party, state. The Grand Council was a council composed of the leaders of the Fascist revolution and, as such, was extra-constitutional from its inception. While composed exclusively of Fascist party leaders, the Grand Council spoke for the entire nation, controlling the initiation and the promulgation of legislation. Until 1928, in effect, the functions of the Grand Council were extra-legal. In that year, the law of the Grand Council to which Gentile refers, rendered the Council's activities lawful. More than that, the law of the Grand Council, for all intents and purposes, made the Head of the Government, Mussolini, and the members of the Council, the final arbiters of what was to count as constitutional law for the nation. After the passage of the law of the Grand Council, not a vestige of the liberal parliamentary system remained. It is in that context that Gentile's comments are instructive.

It is impossible to allow the law of the Grand Council to pass without a few words of comment, since it has given rise to thousands of expositions and judgments by journalists of the entire world, and concerning which one might imagine that everything had been said. Its importance is such that everything that has been said is nothing compared to that with which history will concern itself. A constitutional law of this kind is the beginning of a new history, to which the journals allude. But it has not been from this point of view, in general, that the law has been considered.

There are two ways to consider and appraise a law: juridical and political. The second easily transforms itself into the first— since whoever speaks of the political significance of a law frequently closes with a consideration that is entirely juridical, from which the political spirit remains extrinsic.

The jurist considers the form of the law, its coherence, its relationship to the system of State laws. When one deals, as in the present case, with constitutional law, all the interests of the jurist concentrates itself on the examination of the compatibility or incompatibility of the new laws and the fundamental Statute.[18]

[18] At the time of the revisions of the Statuto of 1848 by which Italy was governed until the Fascist reforms, constitutional reform could be conducted "piecemeal" by means of ordinary legislation. The *Statuto* contained 84 brief articles that were simply broad declarations of principle. As the *Statuto* matured through practice,

The political, on the other hand, looks toward the substance of the law—any law—which never limits itself exclusively to its technical content (finance, public health, economy, education, etc.), but conforms to the political reality to whose development all laws, more or less, contribute.

But true political considerations would not limit themselves, as is often the case, to the study of the relationship between political tendencies already defined, laws extant in legislative and institutional forms, and the new laws introduced into the juridical system of the State. In doing so, one returns from the political point of view to the juridical. The judgments tendered take on a formal and theoretical character, one might say retrospective character—for they define past as well as present reality. They are reflections on that reality. They do not simply accept past development, but rather commit themselves to the formation of a new consciousness—in whose realization consists the entire political life of a people—its evolving history. One does not undertake politics, or make history solely by promulgating new laws, creating new institutions, or winning battles, but also (and properly) by developing new spiritual attitudes, new ideas, and creating, in fact, new human beings and a new spirit.

Political considerations are not theoretical, but practical, in the most exquisite sense of the word. They look not to the past, but to the future. They are not animated by intellectualistic interests, conceptual or formal systematizations, but by a profound sense of the historic reality of the nation and its development. They therefore consider the real nucleus, the historically significant and actual substance of laws. Political considerations are never extraneous to the political form in which the process of national life, in its unity, finds expression.

Perhaps this has been too long a preamble—but it is not pointless in the present circumstances, considering that it might be of assistance to persons in recognizing the new political situation in which Italy finds itself since the 20th of September 1928. After that date, it was no longer appropriate to appeal to the categories of political judgments which had hitherto served in the daily polemics between Fascists and anti-Fascists about the Fascist revolution, and on

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there was no Italian court charged with the responsibility of passing on the constitutionality of acts adopted by parliament or promulgated by the monarch. Once Mussolini received, from the Italian parliament, the power to decree legislation, he could transform the *Statuto* by integrating and adjusting legislation to meet the ends of Fascism. In 1928, Mussolini had Italian law take cognizance of a distinction between "ordinary" and "constitutional" legislation when the Fascist Grand Council was made a major agency of the State, and afforded the power of passing on all "questions having a constitutional character." The Grand Council, chosen by Mussolini (and confirmed by the King), thus became a central organ of the State.

which turned the contrast of the two terms equally vital and operative: Constitution and Revolution. It was a contrast which the Fascist regime sought to gradually resolve by constitutionalizing the Revolution. There arose at every step the opposition of the paladins of the Constitution—directed against the representatives of the Revolution. Conversely, the followers of the Revolution were provoked to attack the institutions and the authority of the State organized in accordance with the old Constitutional norms. The last typical example of that contrast arose in the Senate around the electoral law—at which time the Head of the Government had reason to affirm, in concluding the debate, that Fascists and their adversaries spoke two different languages. They were different languages because the adversaries of Fascism raised a simple legal question (that involved above all the constitutional form of the Fascist Grand Council that was very active politically) while Fascists were occupied with singularly political issues.

Today, every equivocation has been eliminated. The Constitution has been fundamentally altered. The formal basis for any discussion by the constitutional jurists of the opposition has been removed. The liberals of one time who were the defenders of the Constitution and the State—in so far as the latter had its structure and its guarantee in the Constitution, and who presented themselves as the guardians of order—have now either abandoned the field or have assumed a posture diametrically opposed to the one previously held. This is true because the liberty they sought was never an abstract and anarchical individualistic liberty—it was the liberty of the individual within the State and within the fundamental laws of the State. That liberty, by virtue of the laws of the Grand Council, is now Fascist liberty, that is to say, the liberty of the citizen whose will is explicated and actuated through a new system of constitutional life. In that life, among other things, representation is no longer bicameral but tricameral. The third representative house, which concentrates and purifies every element of the national will that is singularly political, brings together and organizes every effective force that pretends to represent and interpret that will. That third house of representation, in accordance with the classical principle of every State constitution, shares power with the Monarchy. It is a power that is truly the result, and at the same time, the principle of State personality in which the national tradition and conservative interests reconcile themselves to the dynamism of popular life in its historic development.

The two major articles of the law are those that assign to the Grand Council the formation of the list of Deputies nominated to

parliament, to be then subject to election by the nation.[19] That is coupled with the preparation of a list of counsellors from which the Crown might select the Head of Government.

The first article does not destroy, but establishes the popular and progressive character of national representation; and the second does not deny the King, as is proper in a monarchical State, the selection of a Head of Government with the assistance of his ministers—just as it was in the parliamentary system when the selection involved the advice of parliament. In fact, the new system reinforces the prerogatives of the Crown. If the fluctuating majority in parliament was, in fact, free of every limitation, directive, and corrective action of the Crown, in the new Fascist regime the constitution of the Grand Council is anything but the result of a contingent national will. All of its ordinary members receive the approval of the King. They are drawn from the hierarchical organization of all the spontaneous forces of national life. It is true that [in pre-Fascist times] parliamentary recommendations [to the King] was a practice and not specifically a constitutional right. Precisely for that reason it had an elasticity and an indeterminate character that, as we can observe in the experiment with proportionality, succeeded in entirely nullifying, in practice, the discretionary power in choice exercised by the Crown. Choice, in the old parliamentary system, became subject to the arbitrary play [of majorities produced by] various combinations of groups, including mercurial little groups. The new written law and the consequent discipline of the large numbers involved, compatible with the ulterior selection of the Sovereign, guarantees the compatibility of the national will with the supreme directive will of the Monarch. It provides a guarantee that tumult and lack of continuity will not disrupt the normal historical development of national life. [The new system provides for] liberty and order, progress as well as conservation of those vital and essential elements of the national organism—which are necessary, as is the case in every organism, if it is to develop. An organism cannot develop if it does not conserve and defend, unchanged and unchangeable, its fundamental nucleus and its living individuality.

The Fascist State possesses an acute awareness of its proper individuality—and, as a consequence, an equally solid and profound instinctive sense of its own conservation, together with a sense of its own power of development. It possesses a powerful concept of the absolute autonomy of its proper ethical personality and of the consequent continuity of its very being. All of which means that the

[19] The similarities with the system that had emerged in Stalin's Soviet Union require no comment.

Fascist State opposes itself to every conception that would make it the result of contingencies. It conceives itself as the necessary principle and the origin of every value it acknowledges. In the Grand Council, as the vehicle of all those forces operating to sustain that State, it has fashioned an organ compatible with the Constitution. The Grand Council was initially created through the obscure instinct of great revolutionary forces. Through the Grand Council, the will of an extraordinarily gifted human being becomes an organic and enduring institution. That which appeared as an ordinary and contingent creation of an individual, becomes the constitutional structure of the nation. The hero depersonalizes himself and transforms himself into the spirit of his people—a spirit that organizes and disciplines all the energies necessary to sustain the new vital impulse from whence comes redemption—which has acquired consciousness of itself and of its proper destiny.

With the law of the Grand Council the Fascist Revolution completes its transformation and completely resolves itself in the State. The Party ceases to be a party among many. It sends its Secretary to the Council of Ministers. [The Party is no longer only a part of the forces that make up the governance of the nation.] As the organization of the great majority of the nation—or of the politically significant masses of the Italian people—the Party becomes the nation. Having brought forth the government out of itself, the government is recognized by the people and the people are governed by it. The minorities that remain at the margins of national life are, by the Party, through the Grand Council, made valuable insofar as they can make a moral contribution to that life. They are means or instruments, rather than the subjects of the political life of the nation. Political life truly coincides with the Party, insofar as it adheres to the Regime—or rather, to the spirit which informs and sustains the life of the nation. The Party is totalitarian in law and in fact—because politically, law prevails over fact and not vice versa.

With the constitutionalization of the Fascist Regime the new history begins in which all Italians are invited to collaborate under the emblem of the Lictor's Rods—no longer to be Fascists and anti-Fascists, but Italians—no longer revolutionaries or defenders of the old regime, but citizens of the new Italy, united in the common proposition that they all take part in the grandeur and power of the nation. Within the State there is liberty with discipline; outside the State there is nothing. Within the new laws every right is sacred, because every right is a duty. It is a duty of the citizen to himself, because it is a duty to the Fatherland.

It is a new ideal, to which the Fascist Party is and must be

responsible. The Fascist Party, in its triumph, feels the enormous weight of the responsibility it has assumed.

1928

SELECTIONS FROM WHAT IS FASCISM[20]

THE TWO ITALYS (PP. 13-16)

To begin with, you are asked to consider if it is not the case that the two distinct and different images of the Italy we have identified do not emerge from history. In truth, we all seek Italy. History is not a past that is of interest only to the erudite—it is present, alive, in the soul of us all. Those who are Italians feel themselves a part of this Italy. They find themselves not only in the blue of its sky, in its hills and its water, nor only in the desolate or mountainous land that alternates with its fruitful plains and its smiling gardens. We close our eyes, let us make abstraction from the horizons of its landscapes so varied in beauty and light—and Italy remains in our soul; in fact, it enlarges and expands in the glory of that which it is. In the mind and the heart of all civilized human beings who appreciate it, or at least recognize it, Italy is recognized as a nation of intelligence, and of a millennial culture that has never been eclipsed, of art and of solitary thinkers, of tormented civil life because of internal difficulty, of a national society slow in its labored process of organization and unification amidst foreign powers struggling in the vast organizing process of modern Europe. All, observing this more or less, and more or less involved, cognizant and sensing, have been, in themselves, unable to separate themselves from this historic living Italy, with a life that has roots buried deep in the centuries. It remains Italy, with its national characteristics—characteristics that became increasingly more evident...as the communes grew out of the defeated Empire, with liberty and art as their driving impetus. Italy was preparing for the Renaissance. The Renaissance was the most creative product of the Italian spirit, the most splendid beacon for everyone everywhere, which doubly inspired the Italians to seek access to the new science, new art, new thought, new faith—in effect—to the modern age. That Italy that we all carry in our hearts, and which forms, in fact, the substance of our being and of our character—if we watch it intensely today, with a gaze made more acute by our desire for a more elevated and powerful national life, with a passion that we cherish within ourselves after the agony of defeat and the pride of victory in the Great War—that Italy presents itself to us in two manifestly different forms. We see two Italys before us—one old and the other new.

There is the Italy of the ages, which is our glory but which is also our sad legacy, heavy on our shoulders and a burden to our spirits.

[20] Giovanni Gentile, Che cosa è il Fascismo: Discorsi e polemiche (Florence: Vallecchi, 1925).

It is a legacy which we must candidly admit is a disgrace of which we would be free—for which we must make amends. That great Italy of the ages, that has so large a place in the history of the world, that is recognized and studied and investigated by all civilized people, is the Italy whose history is not a particular history, but an epoch in universal history: the Renaissance.

In the Renaissance there is much light, yes, and there is much in it with which Italians may share national pride. But there is much darkness. For the Renaissance is also the age of individualism, that through the splendid visions of poetry and art brought the Italian nation to the indifference, skepticism, and distracted cynicism of those who have nothing to defend, not in their family, their Fatherland, or in the world where every human personality conscious of its own value and personal dignity invests itself. The Italians of the period had nothing to defend because they did not believe in anything beyond the free and pleasurable play of their own creative fantasy. From thence, came the frivolity of a pattern of behavior both decadent and corrupt. That behavior slowly extinguished the active sentiment of nationality and thereby enfeebled souls. The literature that arose was one in which carnival songs and bizarre burlesque of every sort were combined in a comedy that drew from the mockery of storytellers, witty and cynical, its material and its spirit—a comedy that is, however, never true art, which has one sense—the pain beneath the laughter....It is an empty literature, superficial, without soul. Sonnets, songs in abundance—but never a person who expresses his passion in song. Cultural institutions appear uncertain. As much culture as one wishes, but sterile, dead. Persons without will, without character, life without purpose. [All of that is the culture] of particular individuals who think of themselves and nothing more. An Italy of strangers, not of Italians. Italians without faith and therefore absent. Is not this the old, decadent Italy?

THE RESIDUES OF THE OLD ITALY (PP. 16-17)

That Italy, for us, is dead. Thankfully, there is another. It can be said, in a certain sense, that the old Italy has been dead for two centuries. But not so dead that we do not find it, at times, before us even today, in this year of grace 1925. There remain too many people in Italy who do not believe in anything and ridicule everything, sighing for the tranquility of the schools and academies—taking umbrage with those who disturb their digestion. Do you recall the eve of the Great War when the few believers dragged off the many who shrugged their shoulders repeating that old canard of foreigners that Italians were incapable of committing themselves—when our youth

felt the thrill of an obscure instinct and gave themselves over entirely to the nation, blindly confidant in its fate, in the power of the people, in the necessity of a great and horrible test that would solidify the nation's recent unification—before that time more conceived in mind than believed in. The fiber of Italians had not been tested, realized, and tempered in battle—a battle for which every free people must always be ready. The mature men, the wise ones, smiled and calculated, and were horrified by the thought, as they would say, of futile sacrifices. They trembled at those dangers that, because of prudence, had never been confronted and would never be confronted by anyone not animated by an indemonstrable faith. Today that cowardly, myopic, and skeptical neutralism is synonymous, for many Italians, with an inability to deal with Italian problems as Italians. But that kind of spiritual temperament is of the old style. It undertakes no effort because of a lack of belief; it flees from courage because no advantage is recognized in the sacrifice, measuring national fortunes only in terms of individual well being, preferring always to travel where the way is solid, never to compromise oneself, never to become involved, leaving ideals to poets, to women, and particularly to philosophers, setting aside every question that might jeopardize the settled and quiet life, and is content making jest of everything and anything, always seeking to deflate any poetic enthusiasm, recommending moderation at all costs, and exhibiting a sacred horror of polemics and violence, making its own all the maxims of egoism—reflecting, studying, and understanding them as though they were the quintessence of cleverness and wisdom. Is not all of this, for many, the non plus ultra of the shrewdness peculiar to Italians?

There are the Masons who, it is acknowledged, have driven their secular principles to logical conclusion: they are neither for religion nor against it. That is the case not only for Masons, but for how many Italians who prefer to be silent on religious matters, have reservations, and are ashamed of revealing and defending their own convictions—if they have any.

All of this is the old Italy, the Italy of individualism, the Italy of the Renaissance—when even the sacrifice of philosophers was sterile because not honored, and not honored because it conformed to the logic of their own doctrines, all individualistically closed up in a world without connections to that life in which was to be found that concrete reality with which they necessarily had to deal and for which they were necessarily required to sacrifice. Human beings did not feel that their personality was an intrinsic part of the social world to which each belonged, in which each lived his own interests, with his family, with his faith as a moral person that has duties, with a program to realize

and a truth to profess. There is nothing alive in the recesses of our soul that does not wish expression, to preach that which is our truth, to communicate it to all, to strengthen it with all the energy that derives from collaboration, from living together, from rendering common our moral life. Every faith draws persons together...

MAZZINI (PP. 23-24)

Even in the times of Mazzini, there were liberals who gave the individual priority before all else. We still have those liberals underfoot who prove recalcitrant, and resist the irresistible movement of history. Liberalism, during the time of Mazzini, raised a fiery banner, the flag of liberty—that banner of liberty that even Mazzini adored and for which he struggled. Liberty at that time, politically, was necessary for the nation in its struggle against foreigners and was necessary for the citizens in their struggle against the State. It was thus, a matter of principle. But Mazzini maintained that true liberty was not that of individualistic liberals who failed to recognize the nation as superior to the individual, and did not thereby acknowledge the mission that awaited peoples, nor the sacrifice to which individuals are bound. Against that liberalism, Mazzini directed the charge of execrated, blind, and absurd materialism.

THE CONCEPT OF THE NATION (PP. 26-28)

Today we also affirm liberty—but within the State. The State is the nation, that nation that appears as something that limits us and subordinates us, and makes us sense and think and speak, and more than anything else, to be in a certain manner—Italians in Italy, children of our parents and of our history. All that is a fable, in the same fashion that nature, in general, with its laws is understood to have fashioned us in a certain form and figure, destined for a certain well-defined and immutable life is a fable. It all appears that way, but it is otherwise.

One of the major articles of the Mazzinian faith is the following: the nation is not a natural existence, but a moral reality. No one finds the nation at birth, everyone must work to create it. A people is a nation not in the sense that it has a history, an empirically established past, but only insofar as it feels its history, senses that history, and accepts it in living consciousness as its personality, that personality on which it is necessary to work day by day. As a consequence, it is a personality that one can never claim as a possession. It is not something that exists in nature—as might the sun, the hills, or the

sea—personality is rather a product of an active will that constantly directs itself toward its ideal and which can thereby be said to be free. A people is a nation if it conquers its liberty, assessing its value and confronting all the pain that might be required in the course of that conquest, uniting its scattered members in a single body, redeeming them and founding an autonomous State, which is not a given, but a creation, with the assistance of the Deity, that is revealed and works in its own consciousness. This is the high Mazzinian conception of the nation, that can, in fact, reawaken national sentiment among Italians, posing our problem as a problem of education and revolution—a revolution without which not even Cavour was capable of making Italy. That is the nation—a nation through which Italians can only feel themselves forever connected with Mazzini's Young Italy and to those who today call themselves Fascists. The nation, in truth, is neither geography nor is it history: it is a program, a mission. And therefore, it is sacrifice. It is not, and will never be, a labor that is finished. It will never be that grand museum that Italy was at one time for Italians, who were its custodians, and in whose hands foreigners would leave a pittance when they came to visit. Yes, museums, galleries, monuments of an ancient grandeur and splendor will remain—not so that we might catch butterflies under the arch of Titus or mindlessly sit through academic commemorations in the Campidoglio, but rather to defend the memories with works that recapture the most ancient traditions and ennoble them in the present and the future. The memories are a patrimony to be defended not with erudition, but with new labor, and with all the arts of peace and war, which conserve that patrimony, renewing and increasing it. To the monuments, should they be chosen, new ones can be added. We should raise monuments in our plazas to reinforce our moral strength, to honor the living more than the dead. Monuments should be employed in consecrating more recent memory. Our recent past is really more glorious than that of history. Through the admonitions that emerge from generous recall, we should elevate our consciousness as free citizens of a great nation. Where the nation is conceived in such fashion, even liberty is more a duty than a right—another conquest obtained through the abnegation of the citizen prepared to give everything to the Fatherland without asking anything from it.

FASCISM'S RETURN TO THE SPIRIT OF THE RISORGIMENTO (PP. 28-29)

This concept of the nation upon which we insist, is not an invention of Fascism. It is the soul of that Italy that slowly supersedes

the old. Fascism is that vigorous sentiment of nationality that carried Italians into the fire of the Great War. Its impetus made it possible for them to prevail in that tragic test. It made energetic reaction to the materialism of yesterday that attempted to cancel the value of that test, and prostrate the spirit of Italians. There was a desperate discouragement—a weariness and desire for well being, the more impatiently coveted because more difficult to obtain. Fascism emphasized the grandeur and the beauty of the sacrifice endured as Italy's most significant legacy for the future. In doing so, Fascism once again powerfully shocked Italians in order to have them remember that they were the children of Italy—to bring once more to mind that which, beginning with the Risorgimento, made that Italy possible. Fascism sought to have Italians remember that which rendered our fathers ashamed of their servitude, to have them shake off inertia, to liberate themselves of the old rhetorical and literary remnants of the past and begin to speak seriously about liberty.

Fascism has returned to the spirit of the Risorgimento with that vigor that derived from the new consciousness that arose out of the Great War. The war was a test completed with honor by the Italian people. It provided a sense of a capacity to commit the nation, to win, and to count in the history of the world. It has returned with an impatience to awaken the nation from the recent and temporary confusion—the stupor that afflicted its consciousness—so that the product of its immense sacrifice in the Great War would not be lost. The fact is that Italy has earned a place as a great power—and that has almost been attained. That it has become a nation with its own will, must not be lost sight of. It should become the object of that will, to be conquered and firmly retained.

FASCIST VIOLENCE (PP. 29-32)

In its impetuous ardor, Fascism has employed violence when it believed violence necessary. At a certain point, the persons of old Italy pretended to be scandalized by that. At first, Fascist violence served their interests—when the State appeared on the verge of collapse and was no longer capable of guaranteeing public order—something that created some inconveniences even for those who might be disposed to allow the moral values of the war to be lost and trampled upon. They had continued to give lip service to the Mazzinian religion of the nation as long as the individual enjoyed security of life, labor, and thought—the "natural" liberties. In other words, [Fascist violence was overlooked] as long as every gentleman that thought about himself and his family was allowed to live comfortably after the privations and the

demands of the war!

During that initial period even the truncheons of the Fascist action squads were considered a divine intervention. But as soon as the reordering of the State provided for the security of normal life, the cause that made Fascist violence necessary was forgotten —it is easy to forget all that when the threats are past. It was not enough that the Head of the Fascist Government announced that the truncheon was retired to the attic. The argument was that the State, the product of Fascism, would promote and defend its own ideals. It was not enough that the Fascist squads became a regular, though voluntary, militia of the State. It was not enough that Fascism no longer wished to be a force external to the State. The truncheon, in all its material brutality, was made the symbol of the spirit of Fascist violence. Every crime, every abuse of power, every arrogance, committed by delinquents who identified themselves as Fascist was employed to identify Fascism, itself, as immoral. What seemed to have been forgotten is that every party that pursues revolutionary purpose—counting hundreds of thousands of followers in its ranks—must necessarily find among them delinquents, exploiters, and the arrogant. They had insinuated themselves into the Fascist Party. They, unfortunately, were recognized, at the cost of the movement, too late. Fascism was stamped immoral—the wrath of God.

What followed was an appeal to Franciscan sweetness and charity to one's neighbor that had never been heard before in Italy. There appeared a kind of Quakerism in Italy that had never been observed before. Those who have recognized that a State which is not strong is not a State—have always employed the moral question in order to shake a strong government. I do not wish to insist on that point. Old Italy must have patience, and concerning the moral question, must await the verdict of history. Fascism cannot be confounded with those men who, here or there, today of tomorrow, might represent it. Fascism is an idea, a spiritual movement, that has its own intrinsic force, born of its own truth, and its own response to profound historical and national needs. What everyone notes today is this curious fact: Fascism's adversaries, knowing that Fascism is an idea, do not direct their objections to one or another Fascist, but toward all Fascists without distinction—or at least toward those who come forward to defend Fascism. Against them, from dawn to dusk, these preachers of Franciscan benevolence—they now call themselves Liberals—hurl ridicule, invective, fantastic accusations, defamation, and calumny—knowing them to be such. It is linguistic violence and a calculated cynicism that would bring shame to a brigand. None of Fascism's opponents maintain any scruple—not even the intellectuals

and philosophers that are found swarming, for obvious reasons, among the anti-Fascists. To say to a gentleman: you are a beast, or an exploiter, or violent, or an agent of crime or an instigator of delinquency—to our innocent Liberals, that is not violence. Because it appears only in print, violence is not violence. So much for the word-magic of those most devoted to the defense of the freedom of the press.

Now, we say it clearly once again for all persons of good will. There is violence and there is violence. No one worthy of marching under Fascist guidons has ever confused the two. Those who are not worthy of remaining with us—are to be expelled when discovered. There is private violence, which is arbitrary, anarchic, and which undermines society.[21] If Fascism is not a word devoid of meaning—something that even its adversaries do not pretend—private violence finds no more determined, more genuine, more formidable an enemy than Fascism. There is another violence, willed by God and by all men who believe in God and in order—in support of laws that God certainly wishes to obtain in the world.

It is clear to all men of good will that there is a violence that refuses to accept the notion that there is some parity between the law and the delinquent. One of Europe's great thinkers noted that were the delinquent possessed of right reason, he would freely choose, accept or demand, that punishment that is his due. The will of the law ethically annuls the will of the criminal—and expresses itself in a form of sanctioned violence. Moralists, beginning with Jesus, made recourse to violence when they were firmly convinced that violence represented the law—the will of a superior or universal interest. In the Catholic Church this is true not only for Dominicans but for the followers of Saint Francis.

With the State, that has always been true. When the State was in crisis, it has always been revolutionaries who employ violence to establish a new State.[22] Is not Fascism a revolution? Its idea is certainly revolutionary. Those who would deny that are those who foolishly propose that the March on Rome that brought Fascism to power might have been accomplished through pacific, bloodless, means—and are daily employed in deploring and denouncing the bloody and uncompromising violence of Fascism.

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[21] See Mussolini's comments in "L'Azione e la dottrina Fascista dinnanzi alle necessità storiche della nazione," *Opera omnia* (Florence: La fenice, 1971-1974. Hereafter cited as *Oo*), 18, pp. 413-414.

[22] The Fascist argument was that the violence of Fascism was the violence of a "virtual" state, a revolutionary state ready to discharge the obligations the established state was incapable of performing. See Mussolini, "Stato, antistato e Fascismo," *Oo*, 18, p. 260.

THE RECURRENT BARBARISMS OF GIAMBATTISTA VICO (PP. 32-33)

We have cited, among those memorable founders of the new Italy, the great Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico. Those who oppose Fascism will perhaps smile when we suggest that the good Catholic philosopher of the Scienza nuova is to be found among its spiritual masters. I would have them consider the "heroic morality" that found expression among humankind at the time when the old deities were abandoned, and families, society, and the State were founded, in accordance with the designs of providence—with force and violence. I would have them reconsider Vico's doctrine of waves of recurrent barbarism that bring in their train that violence which reorders and uplifts degenerate States. Their uplift produces the very liberty of those nations. It renders them more civil—where reason, fully explicated—slowly produces a regime of absolute civil equality.

How often has Fascism been charged with barbarism by malevolent dullards? Let them consider the precise significance of that barbarism—of which we boast.[23] It is a barbarism made up of a lucid energy destructive of false and baleful idols, restorative of the health of the nation and the power of the State by reaffirming its sovereign rights—which are, in fact, its duties. Our barbarism disdains that sham intellectualistic culture that corrupts and falsifies, and which is inclined to, and indulgent toward, individualistic velleities and anarchistic egoisms—just as it distains false piety and hypocritical fraternity. It abjures that etiquette that weans one away from rude and healthy candor and accustoms one to reciprocal deception and intolerable tolerances. We seek to provoke in the Italian soul an inextinguishable thirst for knowledge that is the labor and reform of the interior of humankind and the acquisition of the moral and material means for a life always more elevated, always more productive, for the individual and for the nation—in fact, for humanity and the world. We seek the enhancement of the world. We seek the enhancement of the world because we live in it and with it. We will educate our children—those young people, filled with enthusiasm, who have collected around us—to feel that life is not pleasure, but duty. If one loves one's neighbor, one is counseled not to provide him with, or facilitate his obtaining, the quiet life. Rather one should assist and prepare him for labor, for sacrifice. That conviction best embodies the love of parents for their children. Parental love is not caresses and blandishments; parents should seek, with workman-like effort, to instill an austere and

[23] See Mussolini's early comments on the "invasion of barbarians," "Avanti sempre o barbari!" *Oo*, 3, pp. 86-87.

prescient vigilance in children until each is prepared and capable of dealing with life's necessities, with the laws of the world, with duty.

THE FASCIST DOCTRINE OF THE STATE (PP. 33-34)

From our Mazzinian consciousness of the sanctity of the nation—which, in reality, manifests itself as the State—we draw the reasons for our customary glorification of the State. To the old style skeptics, glorification of the State is nothing more than a new piece of rhetoric. They observe us with a wink and a smile—somewhere between foolishness and cunning—to repeatedly whisper: worship of the State! It is the response to be expected from a form of liberalism that Mazzini characterized as individualistic and materialistic.

At this moment, a thought comes to mind. In 1882, a noble person was wont to say that he was also a liberal, but a liberal of a good sort, one of those who really believed in liberty and loved it. We find ourselves at this juncture, he would say, lamenting the disorder of parliamentarianism and the arrogance of the radicals against the State. He held that they had reduced the State to an instrument of their caprices and of the fickle pretensions of the crowd and of cliques.

We have come to this: In Italy we have even forgotten the very etymological origins of the term "State." The State, with respect at least to individual whimsy, must remain, must rule, as something firm, solid, and indestructible. Law and force: Law is that which makes itself respected and which does not capitulate every time it fails to please the individual or does not favor this or that special interest. If it would be that force, it must be domestically and externally powerful—capable of realizing its proper will. A rational or reasonable will, as is the case with every will that cannot remain at the stage of simple velleity, but must translate itself into action and success. It must be a will that cannot allow others to limit it. It is, therefore, a sovereign and absolute will. The legitimate will of citizens is that will that corresponds to the will of the State, that organizes itself and manifests itself by means of the State's central organs. With respect to its external or international relations—war, in the last instance—tests and guarantees the sovereignty of the single State within the system of history, in which all States compete. In war, the State demonstrates its power, which is to say, its proper autonomy.

THE ETHICAL STATE (PP. 34-36)

Only that State that wishes to be, is in fact, a concrete will—all others can be considered wills only abstractly. [If one considers

solitary individuals as possessed of concrete will, one would, by implication, imagine that such a will could function independent] of the indissoluble ties by which each is bound to society and breathes in, as though it were part of the atmosphere, language, custom, thought, interests, and aspirations.

[It is the State that possesses a concrete will and] must be considered a person. In order to will, it is necessary to have consciousness of that which one wills, of ends and of means. To have such a consciousness, it is necessary, first of all, to have an awareness of oneself, to distinguish oneself from others, to affirm oneself in one's proper independence as a center of conscious activity—in effect, to be a person.

Whoever says person, says moral activity. One speaks of an activity that wills that which it should will, in accordance with an ideal. The State is that national consciousness, and the will of that consciousness—and draws from that consciousness the ideal toward which it aims and toward which it directs all its activity. The State, therefore, is an ethical substance. Allow the philosophical terminology. The significance is transparent, if each of you will refer to your own consciousness and feel the sanctity of the Fatherland that commands with orders that are not subject to discussion—and must be obeyed—throughout life, without hesitation, and without exception. The State, for us, has an absolute moral value—as that moral substance whose function it is to render all other functions valuable. By coinciding with the State, all other functions attain absolute value.

Keep in mind: human life is sacred. Why? Because man is spirit and as such has absolute value. Things are instruments, human beings are ends. And still, the life of the citizen, when the laws of the Fatherland demand it, must be sacrificed. Without these evident truths that have been planted in the heart of all civilized humanity, there could be no social life, no human life.

An ethical State? Liberals will object. They fail to understand the concept—and level against it the most emphatic protests. Although they pretend preoccupation with the moral order, they call upon traditions, whose principles are the denial of every moral reality. They lapse into that materialism common to the century in which the doctrine of classical liberalism was formulated.

Liberals contend that morality is the attribute of empirical individuals—who alone can possess will—the only personality in the proper sense of the term. The State is nothing other than the external limit on the behavior of a free independent personality—to assure that the behavior of one does no injury to others. This negative and empty concept of the State is absolutely rejected by Fascism—not because

Fascism presumes to impose the State upon the individual, but because according to the teachings of Mazzini, it is impossible to conceive individuals in atomistic abstraction, and then have the State somehow integrate them into an impossible synthesis. We believe that the State is the very personality of the individual divested of accidental differences, shorn of the abstract preoccupations of particular interests, no longer seen or evaluated in the general system in which such concerns find their reality and the possibility of their effective realization. It is personality returned and concentrated in the deepest part of consciousness—where the individual feels the general interest as his own, and wills therefore as might the general will. This profound consciousness which each of us realizes and must realize within himself as national consciousness in all its dynamism, its juridical form, and in its political activity, the very foundation of our own personality—that is the State. To conceive the State external to moral life is to deny the individual, himself, the substance of his morality.

The Fascist ethical State, it must be recognized, is no longer the agnostic State of the old liberalism. Its ethical form is spiritual; its personality is cognizant; its system is will. To speak of "system" is to speak of thought, program. It is to speak of the history of a people gathered in the living fire of an actual and active consciousness. It is to speak of that which it is and that which it can, and must, be. It is to speak of mission and purpose—in general and in particular, remote and proximate, mediate and immediate—in specifics. The State is the encompassing will of the nation—and therefore its all encompassing intelligence. It neglects nothing and excludes itself from nothing that involves the interests of the citizen—whether economic or moral. Nothing human is alien to it. The State is not a great facade, nor is it an empty building—it is mankind itself, the edifice constructed, inhabited, and sustained by the joy and pain of labor and all the life of the human spirit.

AGAINST THE ACCUSATION OF STATOLATRY (PP. 36-37)

Is this statolatry? It is the religion of the spirit that has not been cast into the abject blindness of materialism. It is the torch raised by the youth of Fascism to ignite a vast spiritual conflagration in this Italy that has arisen to struggle for its own redemption. Redemption is impossible if the nation cannot rehabilitate its internal moral forces, if it does not accustom itself to conceive life in its entirety as religious, if it does not train its citizens in that simple readiness to serve the ideal, to work, to live and to die for the Fatherland—that Fatherland that

occupies the foremost place in thought, venerated, sanctified. The nation cannot be redeemed if the military and the school that renders a people powerful is not cherished; if the labor that is the foundation of all national and private wealth, the ground of will and character, is not cherished.

FASCISM AND THE WORKING CLASSES (PP. 37-38)

Fascism is the most intransigent opponent of the myths and lies of international socialism—the myths and lies of those without a Fatherland and without duties, of those who offend the sentiment of right, and therefore of the individual, in the name of an abstract and empty ideal of human brotherhood. Fascism does not conceive of the strong ethical State as a leaden cape that would suffocate every spontaneity in the nation—but as the supreme form of that conscious unity composed of all the forces of the nation in their successive development. Fascism cannot exclude the proletariat—that was introduced and exalted by socialism—from the political arena. The ethical State must grow out of that very reality that includes the proletariat and must, therefore, conform itself to it.[24] The State's force and power derives from its ability to incorporate within itself all the vital constituents of the nation.

For that reason, Fascism occupies itself today with the reorganization of the working masses on a national foundation in conformity with its moral conception of the State.[25] It separates the State from the conventional untruths of the old parliament of professional politicians. Fascism seeks a form of governance in which all the social, economic, and intellectual forces are organized in an order more durable and solid, yet more dynamic—so that the healthy and sincere political currents of the nation would flourish.

I will not enter into particulars which may well be corollaries of Fascist doctrine, but which are not Fascism. It is not the corollaries that provide historic significance to our movement. The importance is in the idea, in its animating spirit—that spirit against which, we are certain, no lesser force can prevail.

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[24] This was a position assumed by Gentile before there was a Fascism. See Gentile, *Discorsi di religione* (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), p. 26.

[25] This is the notion of the "humanism of labor" found explicated in Gentile's last book, *Genesi e strutturà della societa: Saggio di fi losofi a pratica* (Florence: Sansoni, 1946), pp. 111-112. It is found in the English translation in *Genesis and Structure of Society* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 171-172.

FASCISM IS RELIGION (PP. 38-39)

...Fascism is a party, a political doctrine. But Fascism—in so far as it is a party, a political doctrine—is before all else a total conception of life. That is its force...its great merit, and the secret of the prestige it exercises over all those who are not victims of the malign and interminable maunderings of certain newspapers. One cannot be a Fascist in politics and not a Fascist...in school, not a Fascist in one's family, not a Fascist in one's workplace. Just as the Catholic, if a Catholic, invests all of his life with his religious sentiment, and speaks and works, or remains still, thinks and meditates...as a Catholic. Similarly, the Fascist—whether he goes to parliament or remains in the local association, writes in the newspapers or reads them, provides for his own private life or converses with others, looks to the future or remembers his past and the past of his people—must always remind himself that he is a Fascist!

Thus is revealed that which truly can be said to be the defining trait of Fascism—to take life seriously. Life is labor, effort, sacrifice, and hard work—it is a life in which we well know that there is no pleasure. There is no time for pleasure. Before us there is always the ideal to be realized, an ideal that does not allow us rest. We cannot lose time. Even asleep, we are responsible for the talents that we have been given. We must make them develop, not for ourselves who are of no account, but for our country, for the Fatherland—for that Italy that fills our heart with its memories and with its aspirations, with its joys and with its travails—that Italy that reproves us for the centuries our fathers lost. We are now comforted by recent events in which Italian power has miraculously reemerged—when Italy, in its entirety, collected itself in one thought, in one sentiment, in one willingness to sacrifice. It was, in fact, the youth, the Young Italy of the Prophet Mazzini, who were ready, who gave themselves to sacrifice, and died for the Fatherland. They died for the ideal for which only human beings can live and which makes of life something serious. We think of these recent events in which are concentrated all the longings of our people, in which and from which all the hopes of our future arise. Those of us who are conscious of being Italian, of being Fascists, know that we cannot fail to see those six hundred thousand of our dead, [lost in the Great War], arise before us to admonish us that life must always be taken seriously, that there is no time to lose, that Italy must be made as great as they had envisioned it in their final vision—as great as Italy can, and will be, if we also sacrifice for her, every day, forever.

THE MARCH ON ROME (PP. 123-125)

In the March on Rome the entire Italian ideal movement of the first twenty years of this century found its outlet—a reaction against the ideologies that in Italy were prevalent during the last five decades of the nineteenth century, and that took shape in the democratic, socialist (at least in the spurious form in which Marxism assumed in the Latin countries), positivist, illuministic, and pseudorationalist conceptions of life and the world. What were the elements of this reaction: idealist philosophy, that exposed and overcame the materialism that was at the core of all these doctrines; the revival of religious sentiment; the syndicalism of Sorel with its moral and mystic tendencies; the Great War of 1914-1918.

The war was the crucible, in which the spiritual forces were fused that were taking shape in the ferment of youthful spirits, in the course of passionate, philosophic, or religious, literary or social, discussions. They fused and formed themselves in a concrete spiritual life, that is always act, will—the creative power of new forms. The youth of Italy, who had suffered and been tormented, felt that the war, was a grand and fatal experiment for the Italian people. All of this was to find expression in the war—a kind of judgment of God, in which this people that had never fought such a war, was required to unite in a national war of life or death. It involved a kind of mysticism which the war itself could not explain without reference to those antecedents that obscurely matured within souls.

After the war, Fascism seemed to explode like a violent cry from the youth of Italy—and at its commencement, it represented the impetuousness and vehemence of youth. Its violence—which was illegal, and necessarily led to revolution—was a form of the new thought, that could no longer find expression in abstractions, but was rather the constructive activity of a new moral life. The new philosophy no longer acknowledged ideas which, as such, were not will and action—it was held that one could no longer distinguish between theory and practice. The new philosophy taught that the human being who really thinks, profoundly, sensing the truth of his thought, living it, can only turn upon reality and involve himself in the forging of that world in which the truth of his ideas might be actualized and demonstrated.

In that respect, Fascism is a spiritual posture of the highest moral value and of singular historical significance. It is for that reason that the world looks upon Italy with intense interest. Among some of them there is the concern that there very well may be a Fascist Italy! Fascism for Italy is the new force of its redemption—the force that

will redeem her from the centuries-long, millenarian, servitude, that until yesterday oppressed her. That servitude (and who does not know it?) was for a long period political slavery with the national incapacity to form a State. It was always an interior servitude, the product of a false belief that conceived thought as something other than action and saying something was other than doing something. It involved the belief that one might celebrate the ideal with a cult of noble thought and beautiful speech—without involving oneself in sacrifice, tears and blood. Fascism—that genuine thing of which Italian youth has made a religion, for which they are prepared to die—is the greatest victory that Italians have achieved against their greatest enemy: empty rhetoric.

FASCISM AND ITS OPPONENTS (PP. 42-45, 47-48, 49-51, 56.)

...The socialism to which Fascism opposes itself is only one among many of the forms of the degeneration of democracy that typify modern political society. It represents only one of the forms against which Fascism has opposed itself. Nor can it be said that socialism, in its entirety, has been the target of the violence of Fascism. It is necessary to distinguish between socialism and socialism—in fact between idea and idea of the same socialist conception, in order to distinguish among them those that are inimical to Fascism. It is well known that Sorellian syndicalism, out of which the thought and the political method of Fascism emerged—conceived itself the genuine interpretation of Marxist communism. The dynamic conception of history, in which force as violence functions as an essential, is of unquestioned Marxist origin. Those notions flowed into other currents of contemporary thought, that have themselves, via alternative routes, arrived at a vindication of that form of State—implacable, but absolutely rational—that finds historic necessity in the very spiritual dynamism through which it realizes itself.

Fascism combats the abstract class conception of society, rejecting the entire notion of antithetical class interests upon which the artificialities of “class struggle” rests. The concept has already been largely abandoned by theorists. Marxism succumbed to that criticism as quickly as it previously had been elevated by theorists. To the theoretical criticism, practical failure has been added with the advent of the Great War. In the circumstances of the Great War, individual societies were compelled to abandon all ideologies—in order to adapt themselves to reality. They were forced to do so by the internal and irresistible logic of their own organic nature. [The very needs of the war] testified to the solidarity and intimate unity, both moral and

economic, of the constitutive classes of the social and State organism.

With apostolic vigor, Fascists opposed in Marxism the same thing that Mazzini had opposed. Mazzini was the prophet of our Risorgimento and, as a consequence of many features of his doctrine, the master of today's Fascism. Both Mazzinianism and Fascism reject the utilitarian, materialistic, and egoistic conception of life—seeing life as an arena for the discharge of duties, with sacrifice of oneself in the service of an ideal. The Marxism that Fascism opposes restricts the breadth of our thought and of the human heart, representing history as a grand theater of economic interests. Fascism confronts it with the same method as that of Giuseppe Mazzini: not with abstract theoretical argument, but with action, which it actuates and inculcates in youthful hearts.

More than that, Marxism has emerged as an anti-national and subversive adversary of the Fascist Party. It is only one of Fascism's adversaries. Every socialist is anti-national; but not every anti-national is a socialist. While the socialist was, and is, presumably subversive, it is clearly possible that there are some persons, presumptively persons of law and order, who were, and are, more subversive than the socialists. They identify themselves with one of the thousand and one categories of the large, too large, Liberal Party. The socialism against which we struggle is driven by a doctrine that has them assuming postures similar to many of those they continue to identify as their enemy.

We have often observed, for example, the socialists, supporters of the Bolshevik regime, the opponents of the family, make common cause with the Popolari, the defenders of private property and the family as an institution. The doctrine that advertised itself the protector of religious interests, and in particular, of national Roman Catholicism, could often ally itself with the pseudo-democracy of the old radicalism, founded on a Masonic base—that is to say, on an abstract rationalism, generically irreligious, and specifically anticlerical.

These were alliances of equivocal significance and rapid failure, but born of a common principle of evaluation of social and political life and a common doctrine—a doctrine that carried Italian socialist parliamentarianism to the extreme absurdity of fighting to defend parliamentary institutions, the guarantor of a bourgeois liberal society. All of this was the consequence of holding a doctrine that inspired all the gray mediocrity of the fragments of parties to attempt to find whatever way might allow them to form whatever majority, with whatever common denominator, that would permit them to serve as the ruling class. This was the common denominator of democracy.

In our most recent history, who, outside of those in the Camera,[26] could follow all the formations and distinctions and democratic sub-distinctions that formed and reformed themselves every day? Every political fragment sought to salvage, with an adjective, who knows what principle—a principle that sometimes seemed resigned to drowning in the vast whirlpool of the substantive: social democracy, liberal democracy, Italian democracy. The first had no reason for not calling itself liberal and Italian, nor the second to refuse the characteristic of being Italian or social, nor the third that of being social and liberal. All of them mixed themselves together under one banner—under which other fractions in the Camera had no reason to enlist, preferring to identify themselves as liberals. All of them were obscurely committed to the proposition that the superior interests of the nation and the State should be subject to those of the various interests, opposed and chaotic—of class, and of categories. In fact, speaking without equivocation, the notion was that the interests of the nation and the State were to be subordinated to the interests of single individuals, who formed themselves, at times, into a majority, and who could therefore exert major pressure on the legislative and governing organs of the State. This is a notion that should have died long since—that should be expunged, whatever the cost, from Italian political life.

This is the individualistic doctrine of the disintegration of the State and of all the moral forces of the nation. Whoever would undertake a careful examination of the most recent history of Italy, would find, among the advocates of that doctrine, some who were more anti-national subversives than the socialists. They were among those most responsible for socialist errors—most responsible for the lunatic arrogance that allowed the Socialist Party to prevail against the interests of that very "bourgeois" class the liberals were supposed to represent, particularly during the years that followed the Great War, when every star in the sky of the Fatherland seemed eclipsed....

I have heard it said that Fascism is not a doctrine, that it is innocent of philosophy. It is said that Fascism, opposing itself to the destructive forces of socialist demagoguery with the energy of a moral force that was acknowledged by all, would ultimately return to that traditional liberal doctrine with its healthy conception of the strong State prepared to subordinate to the general interests all the particular interests, and to oppose the arbitrary will of individuals with the inviolable dominance of law. I do not hold to that notion. First of all, let us make a distinction. One should not confound doctrine or philosophy with the systematic expositions that one can put together in

[26] The lower house of the Italian parliament.

well-constructed tracts. I am convinced that true doctrine is that which, rather than found in speeches or in books, is expressed in action, in the personality of human beings, and in the postures that they assume when faced with problems. The very solution of problems is more serious than speculating in the abstract, preaching and theorizing. That is counterfeit theory. Real theory is always practice, a form of life—engaging the human being, certainly not through the blind determinism of instinct, but through knowledgeable convictions and mature purposes enhanced by a secure intuition of the goal sought. This human being is committed to an affirmation or a denial much more meaningful than any clear affirmation or negation of speculative philosophy. What could be a more uncompromising negation of the value of life than suicide? And what would be a more emphatic affirmation of its value than the voluntary sacrifice of the citizen who dies for his Fatherland—for the perpetuation of a concrete ideal of life?

Let us therefore leave books aside and look at the animating ideas—and to the consequent significance of facts that are before us in the great book of history—of far greater grandeur than any elaborate doctrinal exposition....

[If one imagines that Fascism shares some affinity with traditional Italian liberalism that, in its time, appealed to a vigorous, sovereign State, one must recognize that in our history, there have been a variety of liberalisms.] Of which liberalism does one wish to speak? I distinguish two principal forms of liberalism. For one...liberty is a right; for the other a duty. For one it is gift; for the other a conquest. For one it is [the product of the equality of citizens]; for the other a privilege and a hierarchy of values. One liberalism conceives liberty rooted in the individual, and therefore opposes the individual to the State, a State understood as possessing no intrinsic value—but exclusively serving the well being and the improvement of the individual. The State is seen as a means, not an end. It limits itself to the maintenance of public order, excluding itself from the entirety of spiritual life—which, therefore, remains exclusively a sphere restricted to the individual conscience. That liberalism, historically, is classical liberalism—of English manufacture. It is, we must recognize, a false liberalism, containing only half the truth. It was opposed among us by Mazzini with a criticism, that I maintain, is immortal.

But there is another liberalism, that matured in Italian and German thought, that holds entirely absurd this view of the antagonism between the State and the individual. It was observed that everything of value in the individual has value and pretends to being guaranteed and promoted, by the very fact that it sees the individual as having

rights exhibiting universal significance. [If that is the case,] such rights express a will and an interest superior to the will and interest of the individual. It suggests a higher will and a superior personality that is shared and which becomes the ethical substance of the individual.

For such a liberalism, liberty is the supreme end and the norm of every human life—but only insofar as the individual and social education produces it, generating in the individual this common will, that manifests itself as law, and therefore as the State. The State is not a superstructure which imposes itself from without on the activity and initiative of the individual in order to subject him to coercive restriction. The State, in fact, is his very essence, that manifests itself only out of a process of formation and development. As is the case in all instances that form the grandeur and glory of humankind—never a quality that is natural and immediate—this is the result of a constant effort through which the individual, winning against those natural inclinations that invariably drag him down, raises himself to heights of dignity. So understood, the State and the individual are all of a piece. The art of government is to reconcile and identify the two terms, in such a fashion that the maximum of liberty is conciliated with the maximum, not only of exterior public order, but also, and above all, with the sovereignty allowed by law and its necessary agencies. The maximum of liberty always coincides with the maximum force of the State.

What force? The distinctions in this arena are dear to those incapable of being comfortable with this concept of force—which is essential to the State, and therefore to liberty. They proceed to distinguish moral from material force. They distinguish the force of law freely voted upon and accepted, and the force of violence that rigidly opposes itself to the will of the citizen. An ingenuous distinction—even if advanced in good faith! Every force is a moral force—because it always addresses itself to the will. Whatever the argument adopted—from preachments to the truncheon[27]—its efficacy

[27] This phrase, concerning the truncheon as a "moral force," has engaged the fantasy of many good people, who succeeded in separating it from the context in which it was employed and simply put it in circulation as a motto characteristic of who knows what kind of apology of violence. As a consequence, the phrase has become popular. For many who do not read, or act as though they cannot read, and entertain themselves exclusively with comic newspapers, I have become, for quite some time, the advocate of a "philosophy of the truncheon." It has become a phrase that has generated confusion. I would suppress it if I were not concerned that its suppression would produce equivocations still more annoying. The material force to which I attributed a moral value—the context is clear—is not private force, but the force employed by the State. The State has always been the repository of force that everyone has acknowledged and respected as moral under the concept of the armed force of the State. The State is not armed in order to deliver preachments. The truncheon of Fascist

can be nothing other that to reach within the human being and persuade him to consent.[28] What the nature of this argument should be is not a subject for abstract discussion. Every educator knows that the means of acting on the will must vary according to temperament and circumstances. It is necessary to deal with this issue seriously. Liberty is not to be found outside the State. The State is not the arbiter of first appeal; it is a living norm, that controls all wills, and realizes in society and in the consciousness of every citizen the irresistible dominance of an iron law...

All of this...is also a doctrine, and arose out of the Great War. We all now possess the sense that Italy has commenced a new phase in its life. Italy has concluded its unification, not just closing an historic period, but rather opening another. We recognize that the Risorgimento was never really effectively concluded. We are now at the real commencement of our national life. We must labor, and arm ourselves, with heart and intellect. We must restore and promote our scientific culture. We must remake our souls. We must acquire a proper consciousness of our mission. It is an imperial mission—not so much in the external world, although the external world requires that Italy, that great mother of peoples, expands in order to live—but more so within Italy itself, to instill in the national consciousness the

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squadrism sought to serve, and served, as the avenging force of the State that had been disrespected and denied by its very constituent central organs. That force was the necessary surrogate of the State in a period of revolution—and according to the logic of all revolutions, the State was in crisis and its force was gradually transferred from its fictive, if legal, organs to its real, if illegal, organs which sought to establish themselves in legality. After the March on Rome, the first problem of Fascism was the suppression of squadrism, which was transformed into the voluntary militia—to become part of the legal armed forces of the State. The truncheon was thus retired to the attic with the hope that it need not ever emerge. It would never emerge if all Italians, Fascist or not, convinced themselves of the necessity and the duty to accord themselves, all together, with the consolidation of the regime that came to fulfill the revolution and thereby to transcend it.

[28] It seems clear that Gentile here argues that the violence of Fascism during the period between 1919 and 1922 was the violence of a virtual, revolutionary state. In other places he argues that Fascist violence was simply revolutionary violence. Beyond that, there is the argument that the state, charged with the uplift of its citizens, could not allow error to prevail under any circumstances. This is the central argument that distinguishes liberal democratic and non-democratic political systems. Mussolini acknowledged that distinction by recognizing the affinities between Marxist-Leninist systems and Fascism. See, for example, Mussolini, "La riforma elettorale" and "Forza e consenso," *Oo*, 19, pp. 195-196, 310. Both Fascism and Marxism-Leninism, as "ideocratic" systems, agreed that it would be immoral to allow "false consciousness" to prevail when it was evident what "true consciousness" was. Extracting consent under such circumstances was a moral responsibility. Gentile provided what is perhaps the best argument for this position in his *Riforma dell'educazione: Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste* (Florence: Sansoni, 1955), the relevant parts of which are translated below.

realization that, as a consequence of our past contribution to civilization and our riches in human potential, we possess not only the right, but the duty to reach out.

FASCISM AND CULTURE[29] (PP. 95-101)

...Sergio Panunzio has affirmed, that we Fascists have need of a defined doctrine. He has insisted that those of us here collected as representatives of Fascist culture must insist that the Fascist Party fully articulate its doctrine.

I would say no, friend Panunzio. The very fact that this reunion, in which many who, with their work and thought, have participated, representing a not insignificant part of the recent history of Italy, has amply demonstrated that the Fascist Party possesses a vast ideal content, without the need to define its doctrine and standardize its delivery. This great reunion, that gives voice to many, expresses a common spirit, a soul that vibrates with a single sentiment, all pursuing a single ideal, the spirit of Fascism.

Great spiritual movements make recourse to precision when their primitive inspirations—what F. T. Marinetti identified this morning as artistic, that is to say, the creative and truly innovative ideas, from which the movement derived its first and most potent impulse—have lost their force. We today find ourselves at the very beginning of a new life and we experience with joy this obscure need that fills our hearts—this need that is our inspiration, the genius that governs us and carries us with it.

Many times the Duce—with profound intuition of Fascist psychology—has affirmed this truth: we all respond to a sort of mystic sentiment. Within that mystic state, clear and distinct ideas hardly formulate themselves. Concepts are not defined; they cannot be expressed in precise propositions nor can the links in the reasoning of a faith be reconstructed....[The] faith that animates us as Fascists—that faith that has given us so much joy and so much satisfaction—which comforted us in our days of pain, when malign efforts were made to weaken our spirit—that faith in which we remained firm—was not an articulated doctrine. It was our very sense, our very being.

I was prepared to speak to the congress of Fascist intellectuals about this trait of Fascism, of which no Fascist more than the intellectual has need to comprehend. In this regard, Professor Piccoli, whom you today have heard speak against intellectualism, has perfect reason. All intellectuals are naturally drawn to that illness of the spirit

[29] A speech delivered at the close of the Congress of Fascist Culture in Bologna, 30 March 1925.

that is intellectualism. Intellectualism involves that malady as a consequence of which the human being is slowly led to neglect to participate, always and in every fashion, in life, with its joys, its pains, and all its responsibilities. The individual ends with the conviction that he is a simple spectator, located somewhere beyond good and evil. It is an illness to which the human spirit has been exposed in every time and in every nation, but which (and we do well to remember) it has nested for centuries within the spirit of Italians and has corroded and devastated the roots of every generous activity, of every proposal and courageous magnanimity.

....It is necessary to be very clear. Fascism is war against intellectualism. The Fascist spirit is will. It is not intellect. I hope that I will not be misunderstood. Fascist intellectuals should not be intellectuals. Fascism combats, and must combat, without respite or pity, not intelligence, but intellectualism—which is, as I have indicated, a sickness of the intellect—which is not the consequence of its abuse, because the intellect cannot be used too much. Rather it derives from the false belief that one can segregate oneself from life, to idle with systems of empty ideas, blind to the tragedy of human beings who work, love, suffer and die. For those who understand, there is the place for intelligence—where there is drama, the struggle of man against mystery, the effort to control nature, and intensify life. [One can understand] that intelligence too is will.

Fascism understands that; it disdains culture that is only ornament and adornment. Fascism seeks a culture in which the spirit is armed and reinforced in order to prevail in ever-new battles. That is, and must be, our barbarism—a barbarity of intellectuals. It is a barbarism against science and, above all, against philosophy—but, let it be clearly understood, against the science and philosophy of decadents, of the spineless, of those who forever remain at the window and content themselves with criticism as if [life's struggle] was not their affair!

I would like to assert, parenthetically, one of the major virtues of Fascism is that it obliged, little by little, those who watched from their windows to come down into the street—to identify themselves as Fascists or to oppose it. When all Italians have descended to the street, and think and reflect without any longer retreating to their windows, Italians will once again begin to be the great people they should be.

At this point it is necessary that we do not confuse what should be our culture with the notion of culture as it was understood in the nineteenth century...when the notion of popular instruction first achieved its historic significance. Today, [at this congress] we have perhaps oscillated between these two conceptions—between what I

would call the concept of culture without qualifier, equal for all, which is in itself that which it is, something that has in itself an intrinsic value, like golden coin, which can be passed from hand to hand without losing either its proper value or adding to it. It is a kind of material exchange—a transfer from one brain to another, communicable to a few or a great number of those who have need of it. [There is on the other hand, that] which can be said to be Fascist culture—which given its spirit, its fundamental properties, its significance, its values, and because of its potential to serve in a program of life—is different from every other culture....

Yes, there is an objective science, a technical intellectual performance—a unique instrument which one employs to pursue one end, and someone else another. But [those who have normative goals, like] the Roman Catholics appreciate that techniques are not sufficient—they have understood that this "objective" instrument is an abstraction until we know who will employ it—in what program will it be employed? Beyond the objective inanimate instrument there is the living person, with his interests and passions, small and large, particular and universal. For these science serves—because these men think, and are cognitively aware of themselves, of their actions, of goals sought, and of means to be employed....

To those who persist in demanding that science [in order to be objective] must absolutely remove itself from man and his faith, from the profound convictions that sustain his life, and which he cannot, and should not, renounce—tell them that they neither understand what they say, or they are hypocrites. Therefore, in Bologna, a Fascist university arises, with a single faculty of political and social science that is to be the seedbed of a directive leadership of which we have need. It would be the beginning of a new national culture—because every movement of ideas expands by virtue of its own nature, to slowly invest the thought of a nation, to be ultimately reflected throughout the civilized world....

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONORABLE BENITO MUSSOLINI PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (PP. 231-238)

Your Excellency,

The Commission nominated by Your Excellency with the Presidential Decree of 31 January 1925, composed of twelve senators, deputies and scholars of political and social issues, in order to study "the problems that today confront the national consciousness and attend the fundamental relationship between the State and all the

forces with which it must deal and protect," continues the work begun and already conducted by the Commission of the XV, that in September of last year was charged by the Partito nazionale Fascista with the responsibility of studying the problems relative to the State Constitution that arose with the revolution of 28 October 1922. That Commission was, in fact, assembled on the appointed day on which the anniversary of the revolution was celebrated—and taking its initiative from a communication from His Excellency, Head of the Fascist Party, undertook to formulate the principal themes of the study assigned. Those themes were two: the first dealt with the relationship between the executive and the legislative powers; the other turned on the relations between the State and individual citizens taken both singly and in association (therefore, the State and secret associations, the State and private and public syndicates).

The Commission quickly embarked on an examination of these themes. The Commission decided it would be opportune to select from the second theme the considerations regarding the secret societies—because of the fact that the issue of the secret societies was a matter of not inconsiderable political significance, given the insistence with which the problem engaged the consciousness of the Party out of which the Commission arose. Concerning that argument, it is not necessary for me to recall that as President of the Commission of XV, I had the honor of presenting to Your Excellency the conclusions rapidly concluded in the form of a design of law together with an ample account in which all the historic, juridic and political provisions were clearly provided. That projected law was favorably received by Your Excellency, was presented to Parliament with slight modifications, discussed and approved by the Chamber of Deputies, to be soon a law of the State—that State which Fascism conceives as a regime of superior freedom.

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION OF XVIII

The Commission of XVIII, in which almost all the members of the precedent Commission took part, reassembling for the first time on 26 February, approved the problems that were to be studied, and confirmed the appointment of the two subcommissions that had already begun their labors: one presided over by Senator Melodia to consider the first issue [of the relationship between the executive and legislature] and the other presided over by Senator Corradini, who dealt with the second issue above indicated. The number of persons involved grew from fifteen to eighteen in order to incorporate new technical competences. The subcommissions of the Commission of

XV were appropriately enlarged.

The two subcommissions and the minor committees formed for specialized work, worked intensively and indefatigably with individual research studies, collegial discussions, with inquiries and interrogatives with experts in order to fulfill their mandate. In the brief life of the Commission, 77 meetings were held in spite of the impediments and difficulties that resulted from the fact that many members were not residents of Rome. Thanks to their alacrity, to their patriotic zeal, and to the absolute selflessness which they applied to their work, and above all to the impressive political experience, knowledge, and skill of all in the materials with which they were required to deal, they could prepare for the plenary Commission, in such a brief period, proposals and illustrations that I am pleased to place before the judgment of Your Excellency. The propositions and relative illustrations of the twenty meetings held by the plenary Commission between 26 February and the 24 of June—after ample and laborious debates, in which every aspect of the single questions were examined with every care and from every point of view—resulted in the schematics of the law and the relations which I now have the honor to present to Your Excellency.

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE POWER

The conclusions from the verbal annexes of the meetings have been collected. Here I believe it is only necessary to note that in all the conclusions concerning the relationship between the executive and legislative power, the Commission was in almost unanimous agreement, and that the presentation of the Commission member Barone...expresses that which was the thought of the entire Commission, with the exception of Commission member Gini, whose ideas are to be found in his individual presentation, which is herewith appended. In the conclusions regarding the relationship of the power of the State and the citizens, the Commission divided itself into a majority and a minority. The thought of the majority is contained in the presentation of Commission member Arias, and that of the minority, or at least a part of that minority, is found in the opposed presentation of Commission member Coppola, to which the honorable Mazziotti, Melodia, and Suvich acceded. To that are added the verbal declarations, partially in agreement or analogous, from Commission members Lanzillo and Rossoni, and that contained in the above indicated presentation of Commission member Gini—even though Gini acceded with the majority in terms of the major concepts proposed relative to the second theme—the Corporative Order of the

State.

THE CORPORATIVE ORDER

It was this issue that divided the Commission—although the Commission was unanimous on another principal point, that of the syndicates. Concerning the syndicates, the Commission was prepared, if asked, that they should be legally recognized, but that the syndicates should not be made obligatory, and that those recognized should be limited to only one for each category.

The issue of the Corporative Order was the most innovative idea considered in the studies and discussions of the Commission. It was therefore to be expected that it would provoke doubts, perplexities, preoccupations, and objections within the Commission. The proponents and adherents of this idea long considered it before taking it up. Some of those who had been most opposed initially were to take it up as advocates. The Commission could hardly hope for an easy and early assent from those who were exposed to these ideas for the first time. One is dealing with a complex idea—and one or another of its elements or aspects might easily be exchanged and confused with other ideas—which the Commission more or less opposed.

Certainly, the Corporative Order is an idea that merits serious and attentive reflection, because in the judgment of the Commission, it is the only one which might indicate how the productive forces of the nation might be effectively dealt with within the ambit of the State's action, rendering the State cognizant of the reality of which it is form, and to which it can neither be indifferent nor separate (as the liberal State tended to be) without losing its material base and with it its organic and organizational potential. Abandoning that idea, there remain only two paths. One might content oneself with the abstract State of individualistic liberalism. But that is not the Fascist State—because Fascism, from its very commencement, has maintained an active political posture, opposing liberal individualism, which it has considered abstract and therefore unreal. Alternatively, one might consider pure Syndicalism. But pure Syndicalism is not the syndicalism of obligatory syndicates—whose very legal recognition implies a principle of obligation to an entity superior to the syndicates, that is to say to a State to which the syndicates would be subordinate. That relationship would contradict the central principle of pure Syndicalism which does not recognize any legitimate power external to the spontaneous and free syndicate. Pure Syndicalism prefers the de facto syndicate to the legally recognized syndicate. Pure Syndicalism aspires to absorb the State in itself. In the spontaneous and inevitably

fragmentary character and multiplicity of the syndicates, essential unity would be destroyed. Pure Syndicalism is an ideal alternative that is antithetical to the most profound principles and inspirations of the Fascist State.[30]

THE FASCIST STATE

The Fascist State is a sovereign State. Sovereign in fact rather than words. A strong State, which allows no equal or limits, other than the limits it, like any other moral force, imposes on itself. The Fascist State does not wish to be a State imposed upon the citizen, rather it wishes to be a State which invests the citizen and informs his conscience. In order to actually shape his consciousness, the State sustains and educates that consciousness; the State recognizes and acknowledges the citizen, to treat him both as what he is, and as that which he should be, historically, economically, morally and politically, with all the fundamental interests that shape him and distinguish him from all others. The Fascist State, in order to penetrate and direct the consciousness of its citizens, wishes to organize them in national unity; a unity possessed of a soul. That unity would manifest itself as a unitary being, possessed of powerful will, and conscious of its own ends.[31] The State has its own ends—that are not those of any particular citizen, nor of any class of citizens, neither in their particularity or in their aggregate, living at any given time within the territory of the juridically defined State. The national unity (which Fascists know and intensely feel) is not something that exists in a determinate time. It has its roots in the past. In the present, it looks toward the future. Today, it lives insofar as it draws vitality from the fruit of centuries, and turns to project itself into an immediate and remote tomorrow. Through its program, it seeks to realize the nation's destiny, the mainspring of its every effort, the very reason for its existence.

The Fascist State is idea that vigorously actuates itself. It is an idea and, as such, transcends every present and defined contingent and materialistic form. That is the reason it emphasizes the duties, rather than the rights, of citizens. That is why it solicits them to surpass themselves and anticipate the satisfaction of their own present interests

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[30] The principle here being examined is that of the "totalitarian" state. The Commission recommended that corporativism be solved within the framework of constitutional law, thereby legitimizing Mussolini's formula of the 28th of October 1925: "Everything within the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State."

[31] This is political Actualism, articulated before the advent of Fascism; see Gentile, *Discorsi di religione*, pp. 20-23.

in the future, their own personal advantage in that of the Fatherland, to whom every sacrifice is owed, and from whom every honor is to be awaited.

The Commission, composed of Fascists and classic liberals who view Fascism with sincere sympathy and faith, are inspired with fullness and unanimity of sentiment with respect to that concept, that is the program of the national government and of the Fascist Party.

TOWARD THE FASCIST STATE

None of this is to be understood as an intention, on the part of the Commission, to subvert the Italian State that arose out of the revolution of the Risorgimento. The spirit of Fascism is constructive rather than destructive, and is convinced that the State of the Risorgimento, sustained from the very dawn of revival by the magnanimous faith of the glorious national monarchy, has continued throughout, until the high noon of the victorious and restorative Great War brought the nation to its desired boundaries. That nation, through tradition, is now sacred to every Italian heart, a solid construction to be respected and a solid base upon which the State of the Fascist revolution can be constructed. Thus, in the series of proposals concerning the articulation of the supreme powers of the State, that it is honored to put before the judgment of Your Excellency, the Commission has sought to limit itself to the clearing away all the overgrowth that slowly collected, through parliamentary corruption, around that original and venerated constitutional basis of the Italian State. All that extraneous growth, produced by a corrupt parliamentarianism, gradually overwhelmed that original basis, and made the Constitution serve ends far distant from those of the founders.[32]

[32] The original *Statuto* of 1848 did not prescribe any particular form of "responsible government" for the emerging nation. The notion of "responsible government" grew out of parliamentary practice in Italy. Prior to the Fascist revolution, parliamentary government in Italy resembled that of Great Britain and France. In effect, when the Commission of XVIII recommended a return to the *Statuto*, it was recommending that the Italian parliamentary system be neutralized. A return to the *Statuto* restored the right of the monarch to appoint and remove ministers—something that had been made the prerogative of parliament. From the Fascist perspective, a return to the *Statuto* allowed Mussolini (who was appointed directly by the monarch) to rule without parliamentary interference. Ultimately, given the suggested reform, the law gave the Head of the Government the right of veto over all subjects proposed for discussion in either of the two houses of the Italian parliament. Together with that, Mussolini, as Head of the Government, was specifically declared to be "responsible to the King," not parliament, "for the general policy of the government"— a responsibility the King

It is enough to remember the declaration of the Carl Albert's Minister of Foreign Affairs on the 8 February 1848, when he announced before the representatives of foreign nations, that the new Constitution "was the most monarchial possible"—and then recall the changes in the same Statute that the ministers of His Majesty the King, in that ill-starred year of 1919, considered appropriate—in order to measure the long retrograde distance covered by our institutions from the paths originally intended.

REFORM OF THE LAW AND POLITICAL PRACTICE

The provisions, therefore, suggested by the Commission are limited to particulars, that might appear only accessory to the issue by an inattentive judge. It will certainly not escape Your Excellency that however modest they appear, however cautious in form, inspired by a rigorous realistic criterion of practicability and possibility, these provisions touch very delicate and essential points of constitutional practice on whose restoration may well depend the return of the State to its proper development. That implies as well that the constitution may then serve the ends of the establishment of the anticipated Fascist State.[33] But it is clear to the Commission that all will depend on political custom, that is to say, on the manner in which the constitutional norms are applied. All norms are empty forms that receive significance and concrete value from the spirit with which they are informed. That means that they will receive significance and value only from the force of will with which they are presented, the discipline with which these forms will be observed, and with the faith that animates those who observe them. Given that, Your Excellency—neither the people of Italy nor the Commission of XVIII, can expect true reform except through your efforts, and that of your government. The Commission has only suggested a few instruments that would little serve unless accepted and adopted with committed energy....

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discharged cavalierly until July 1943, when he dismissed Mussolini on monarchial authority.

[33] In retrospect, it is clear that the proposed reforms provided the constitutional grounds for the creation of the totalitarian Fascist state. Serving as President of the Commission of XVIII, Gentile was instrumental in the construction of the kind of state he had long since recommended.

SELECTIONS FROM THE REFORM OF EDUCATION

Giovanni Gentile, La riforma dell'educazione:
Discorsi ai maestri di Trieste
(Florence: Sansoni, 1955. First published in 1919.)

PERSONALITY AND THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

Let us attempt to understand clearly what we mean by concrete personality—and why the personality which we commonly conceive empirically, the particular personality, is an abstraction.

Ordinarily, basing ourselves on the obvious testimony of our experience, we believe that the sphere of our moral personality coincides precisely with that of our physical person, measured by the limits of our body. The body constitutes (or at least that is how it is thought) an indivisible unity, in which various parts, through reciprocal correspondence, form a system. The body seems to us to move in space and remains always, as long as it exists, a unity—separated from all other bodies, similar or dissimilar, in a manner in which the one cannot be in the space where there are others and which, in turn, excludes others from occupying its place. One body then, one physical person, one moral personality—that which in each of us is recognized and is affirmed as self-consciousness, as Ego.

I, myself, not only think, but walk. That same being, that Ego that I am when I think, is the same when I walk, resting or moving within space. Just as bodies are impenetrable, so it would seem are personalities, each of which affirms an Ego, the self. That which I am, no one else can be—nor can I confuse myself with another. Those human beings that are most intimately and closely related to me appear completely external to me. Their bodies exist and move outside of mine. My brother, my father, are dead—they have disappeared from this world in which I live and I remain—just as a rock remains if someone removes a rock which rested nearby, or as a mutilated and abandoned pedestal might remain as evidence of a statue that has been removed. More than a hundred of us are here collected in this room, but none of us have necessary ties to those around us. Shortly, each of us will go our own way without losing anything of himself, conserving his own proper individuality. Our elders lived on earth before us, and as we arrived, they began to withdraw. Just as they lived before us, we will live and develop our personality without them.

According to these notions, each of us has in himself his own proper being and his own particular destiny. Each makes of himself a center and from that center he constructs, thinking and doing, his own world—a world of ideas, of images, of dreams, of concepts and

systems, that are in his brain—a world of values, of desired goods that embellish his life, or evils that he rejects and abhors, all of which have their origins in his will, in his character, in his manner of conceiving and coloring the world.

What does the pain or pleasure of others mean to me? And what does the thought of Aristotle and Galileo mean to me if I do not know them, if I do not read their books, and remain unfamiliar with their science? And of what importance are our most exalted thoughts, and the songs that arise from the depths of our soul, to the stranger that we encounter on the street—who does not even spare us a glance? Another's heroism brings us no glory, nor does the heinous deed of the most violent criminal—while it may horrify us—disturb our conscience. Each of us has his own body and his own soul. Each of us, in effect, remains himself whatever others may be.

This concept that we customarily apply when speaking of our personality—and which forms the basis of every thought about our practical, interpersonal, life—is a conceptual abstraction. In fact, conceiving our being in that manner, we see only one side, allowing the other to escape. We allow to escape that which is spiritual, human, that is to say all that which is really and peculiarly ours. I shall not here investigate how the human personality might have two such diverse aspects, or from which profound source these two manifestations so opposed might spring—so different that the one appears to be the negation of the other. For our present purposes, it is enough to now reflect, and firmly persuade ourselves that, together with particularity, there is another element of our person—an element that is opposed to every particularity, in which we find our most profound nature, wherein we cease to find ourselves in stark opposition to everyone else, and in which we discover ourselves in all others as they are or as we wish them to be.

In order to fix your attention on this more profound aspect of your interior life, I wish to employ an illustrative example—an example that can be understood as a component of the concept of nationality: language. Language, I must remind you, does not belong, per se, to nationality; it has a universal character that becomes national when a particular personality, by acting, employs it for determinate purposes. One must understand that to see language only as a constituent element of our particular personality is to deal with abstractions.

That our personality contains, among its constituent elements, language, is obvious. We employ language not only to speak to others but to ourselves as well. And to speak to oneself means to deal with one's own ideas, one's own soul and, in sum, with oneself—to have

consciousness of oneself as philosophers are wont to say, and therefore to possess self-control, a clear comprehension of our acts, and of all that which stirs within us. It means living not after the manner of a dumb beast, moved by sense and instinct, but as a human being, a rational animal. No one can imagine that a human being can think, have consciousness of self and reason, without expressing himself, and express himself, before all else, to himself. Man has been defined as a reasoning animal. One might also define him as an animal that speaks. That is a truth known already to Aristotle.

Man, understood as an animal that speaks, is not man in general—something that never was—but real man, that man who is each one of us: the historic, existing, and actual human being. He would be a man who does not speak a generic language, but a specific language. That is how I speak, and I cannot but speak a given language, the Italian language. And I exist, that is, I affirm myself, I realize myself, thinking as this personality which I am, in so far as I speak, in my own language. My language, as I said, the Italian language. Herein lies the problem.

If I were not to speak, or were I to speak otherwise than I do, I would not be me. This manner of expressing myself is therefore an intrinsic characteristic of my personality. All of you, everyone, could say as much. But this language which makes me what I am, and which belongs and is intrinsic to me, could it serve me, could I make it flesh of my flesh, if it, mine as it is, was closed within me as the fibers of my being are closed within my body without having anything in common with any other part of the matter with which I coexist in space? My language, in short, could it really be my language if it was exclusively mine, belonging to what we have identified as my particular and empirical personality?

A simple reflection is all that is necessary to demonstrate that my language, which serves as a light that illuminates every angle and renders visible every movement and every sense of my thought, can only so serve because that language is not exclusively my own. It is the same language that allows me to read and understand the authors of our antiquity who, like me, are “Italians.” I read about Francesca da Rimini and Count Ugolino, and they are there in my own spiritual emotions. I read of golden-haired Laura and of the beautiful Angelica—the desire of gentlemen and the unhappy lover of the youthful Medoro. I read of the manner with which the Florentine secretary, Machiavelli, with his acute speculations, sought to establish the principalities and the State of Italy. I read of the many loves, pains, discoveries, and sublime concepts that did not have their origins in me but among those great masters. Once having been given expression by

those masters, the loves, sorrows, discoveries, and sublimities acquired a place in the imagination, the intellect, and in the hearts of Italians and have thereby become the treasures of our literature, bringing light to the life of language, varied and restless, but forever the same. It is a language that I learned as an infant from the sainted lips of my mother, and which I continued to appropriate, studying and reflecting over books and through conversations, exchanging ideas and sentiments daily, over the years, with those of my community. My language is the language of all those, living or dead, that forever unites us, you with me, with our own people.

Should I wish to separate myself, with this language, from this glorious community—should I desire to demonstrate that this language is uniquely mine—I would have produced the exception that proves the rule. For surely a person may devise a cryptic language, a jargon, a cipher. Jargon and ciphers, in fact, are adopted, in order to communicate secrets among a selected number of persons. The groups they form are artificial. The "language" employed, nonetheless, is intrinsically a language in that it imitates nature—it reflects the immanent law of language, which is that language can be anything but secret. Rather, like all the products of the spirit, language intrinsically involves a community, and aspires toward the universal. A cryptic language is possible only because it can be translated into the common language. If one were to give the cipher to the cryptographer—by virtue of the same ingenuity that allowed the cipher to be created—a translation would be forthcoming. He breaks the artificial form and allows the encrypted language to flow back into a language that is intelligible to all who speak the same national tongue.

Moreover, every word, in its original novelty, when it emerges from the inspired breast of the poet who creates it, is something like jargon—it belongs, in a real sense, to the poet who fashioned it. Until the meaning of the word is revealed—the word could be considered part of a private language. And yet, if one looks more deeply, one uncovers its roots in the common language. One may speak to oneself, but with the anticipation of an audience. One speaks a word that must eventually be intelligible to others if it is to serve any purpose. In the circumstances in which he finds himself, one might use a word because it is appropriate—with the anticipation that anyone similarly circumstanced would use that word and no other. His word is the word appropriate to the circumstance. Should the person be a poet, a serious person, who expressed a term particularly apt, a word that is not jargon, he first speaks the language of his people—and then of humanity at large—because what he has to say engages those of many nations, having many languages, including that of the poet.

Language, in sum, is a universal activity, that unites human beings rather than dividing them. It achieves that universality through the agency of the family community, the city, the region and that of the nation—together with many other forms of intimate aggregation and fusion that we find in history.

A person's nationality may or may not be a function of his language. That can only be the product of his will through which he makes and remakes himself every moment of his life. But can that will, that makes of each of us what he is, be his own will—exclusively his own? Or is the will itself, like one's national language—while not a common legacy—an activity shared in common in so far as one cannot live one's life except by living the common life of the nation?

Abstractly speaking, we always find ourselves affirming that mine is a particular will. But insofar as each of us is capable of distinguishing between empty words and will, we recognize the difference between the will that would be will and is not, a velleity—and a genuine, effective will that does not content itself with expressions of intentions, plans, and sterile desires—but acts, and by its action, renders itself valuable, giving evidence of its reality. We are each responsible for what we are—not because of that which we wish to be, but for that which, in fact, we actually want to be. Velleity is the expression of a will directed toward a goal that is absolutely or relatively impossible to achieve. Real will finds expression in that which can be accomplished.

When is it the case that my will is effective and really wills? I am a citizen of my State, that has a power, a will that manifests itself as law—law that it is necessary to obey. Transgression of the law, in a State truly possessed of power and will, will inevitably result in the punishment of the transgressor—the application of that very law that the transgressor has refused to recognize. The State is sustained by the inviolability of its laws—those blessed laws of the Fatherland that Socrates, as Plato tells us, taught us to venerate. I, as a citizen of my State, am bound by its laws insofar as I should choose to transgress them I would be choosing the impossible—like attempting to speak a private language. Should I choose the impossible, I would be indulging in vain velleities, in which my personality, far from realizing itself, would be impaired and dispersed. Conforming my will to the law recommends itself; I will what the law wishes.

It is not important if, materially or explicitly, positive law does not occupy the entire sphere of my activity and leaves to the internal dictates of my particular conscience the determination of the major part of my conduct. This same delimitation between the juridical and the moral, between that which depends on the law of the State and that

which turns on the ethical conscience of the individual, is a distinction that results from the will of the State—there is no preexisting limit to which the constitutive and legislative power of the State must limit itself. Positively or negatively, through command or compliance, all of our conduct is subject to the will by which the State establishes its concrete reality.

There is more. The will of the State reveals itself not only in law (as positive law). The State leaves to private initiative every form of undertaking for which that initiative is appropriate and sufficient without the intervention of sovereign and directive power. It leaves to private management its freedom until such time as private management ceases to be effective. Even when the will seems to be self-motivated, free of every explicit constraint of common law, in fact, that will wishes only that which the sovereign State wishes that it wills. The reality is that a seemingly autonomous will is actually the will of the State not expressed in terms of positive legislation—there being no need of such expression where compliance is automatic. The essence of the law is not in its expression, but in the will that is its source, observes it, and assures conformity to it. The essence of the law is in the will that wishes it. It follows that the law is thus not absent even when it does not take the form of positive law.

In conclusion, I, as the citizen I am, want that which I want; but when one inspects what I want, that which I want coincides precisely with that which the State wants—my will is the will of the State.

And if that were not the case? If I were to accept such an hypothesis, the very soil beneath my feet would give way. For it would mean that I exist, but the State does not. It would be to insist that the State does not exist in which I was born and which protected me even before my birth, which sustained me and fostered this communal life in which I have always lived, which constitutes my spiritual substance, the world upon which I depend with the faith that, while constantly changing, will never fail. I could—it is true—refuse to acknowledge this intimacy by which I am joined and fused with this majestic will that is the will of Italy. I could balk and rebel against its laws. In doing so, as I have indicated, I would be indulging in a velleity. My personality, my very being, incapable of transforming the will of the State, would be overcome and suppressed.

[That some would choose to violate positive law and common practice is probably a consequence of the fact that some] imagine that they could separate themselves from all else, rejecting that common will and every law—and within the vast expanse of their thought, at the height of an inaccessible summit, proudly proclaim the uniqueness of their Ego—and its will. In a certain sense, this notion appears

confirmed by the fact that my personality, like the personality of everyone else, seems capable of conceiving itself in just such fashion. The evidence is deceptive. Is it the case that I can act as a unique being [with a unique will]? Or is it rather that a universal power acts through me as my personal will [and my egoism deceives me]?

Let us reflect. When we morally obey the law, sincerely and effectively, we make the law our own, and our behavior is the direct result of our convictions—our convictions guide our conduct. Every time we act, the condition is that we look within—to determine if our act is an act which should be done. The saint that makes God's will his own, recognizes in his norms a necessity equal to that seeming necessity felt by the sinner. The sinner's sense of moral necessity is mistaken and destined to end in failure. Every delinquent violates the law because he has fashioned a law unto himself in contrast to the laws of the State. He thus proposes his own State—different from that which historically exists. (The existing State exists for good reason. The delinquent will subsequently learn to acknowledge those reasons.) From the point of view the delinquent chooses, his act is reasonable. The transgressor imagines that his reasoning has a universality that would make his act reasonable to anyone similarly circumstanced. The transgressor imagines that his will is not particular, but universal. Giving expression to that will, he would establish new laws in place of the old. He would construct a new State on the ruins of the old. Thus does a tyrant destroy the liberty of the Fatherland, substituting one State for the other—thus does a rebel—assassinating the tyrant and successful in his undertaking—restore liberty. If the rebel is unsuccessful, he is vanquished and his will returns to conform itself to that of the State he failed to overthrow.

That is the way it is. My true volition is the will of the State acting as a particular will—in fact, my true volition is the will of the world of nations in which my own State coexists with the others, upon which it acts, and which act upon it. My true volition is that of the world. My will is not only my own; it is a universal will. It is a form of universality embodied in a political community in which single individuals associate and unite themselves in a higher individuality historically distinct from other political entities that are similar.

Thus we can say that we are prepared to recognize that our personality, in abstraction, is particular; but it realizes itself concretely in the form of a universality, which at one stage is national. This concept of a concrete, because universal, personality is of primary importance for those of us who live in the schools and who have made the education of humanity our life's purpose and mission.

Around the concept of personality, one of the major problems of

education turns. It is the problem that has forever been a preoccupation from the time when reflection on education began. Since one can say that from the time there have been human beings, there has been education, so can one say that there has always been this concern. Education, we must remember, is not a fact, if by fact we mean, as we should, something that has happened, or will probably happen, or must predictably happen by virtue of the regularity of the law which governs it. No, all of you, in your consciousness as educators, feel it: the education of which we speak, which interests us, for which we work, and which we seek to improve, is not something fixed and finished—not something that takes place in accordance with the laws of nature. Education involves free action, the vocation of our souls, the duty of humankind, an act which, more nobly than any other, allows the human being to actualize his superior nature. Animals do not educate themselves even when they raise their young. They do not form families, ethical organisms in which differentiated members [consciously] organize themselves into systems. Human beings, on the other hand, freely and consciously, acknowledge our children as we do our parents and brothers as extensions of ourselves. In such circumstances we consciously develop our respective personalities and seek to assist in the development of the personality of others. In the human family, in society, in the city, in any community, we constitute but one collective spirit, with common needs that are satisfied through individual activity within a social matrix.

If human beings are said to be political or social animals, one can also say that they are animals that educate. We do not only educate the young, our own young, but if education is spiritual action upon the spirit, we educate whenever and wherever we interact, in our families and outside our families, within and outside the school, to the extent that with us they form a society—not only minors who are under tutelage attending school or the workplace where their abilities, their character and their culture is increased and improved—but adults as well, mature and even elderly adults, because there is no living person that does not learn something every day, and does not benefit from human contact. Human education never ceases.

Like every form of his activity, the human being does not educate by instinct or by abandoning himself to natural impulse. He is conscious of what he does—and is aware of what he does in terms of education, to direct it more efficiently toward his goal, without a waste of energy and to attain the best results possible. Human beings reflect.

You recognize that pedagogy is not an invention of pedagogues and pedants who intervene with their theories and elucidations in this blessed work of love that has parents united with children, the masters

with the unlettered, and human beings with each other, in order to extend a hand to help, so that all may rise together from one height, to another still higher, more elevated. Before the word "pedagogy" was coined, as is often the case, the term had a referent. Before there was the term "science" with its title and its university chair, there was that which is the life of science and therefore the rationale for the chair. There was the intense reflection of humankind, which in accordance with the divine injunction "know thyself," became conscious of his own labor, never to allow himself to be simply the object of events, but to consider everything a problem requiring conscious solution. What the animal does unerringly through infallible instinct, human beings undertake to consider everything with conscious intelligence, and seek and explore, through a fallible process, to achieve the good—not infrequently failing but always picking oneself up to achieve a higher grade of cognition and of art. Human education is human, therefore, not a fact, prefabricated and finished, but action. Action always remains a problem for us—that we proceed to solve and which we must keep solving forever.

This is an intuitive truth confirmed by experience, at least as long as we retain that primitive freshness as educators, not to succumb to routine and simple habit—as long as we remain capable of seeing in the face of every new student a unique soul, different from all the others with whom we have dealt, and different from himself with each passing day. This will be true as long as we are capable of assuming our tasks thrilled with anticipation, ready for revelations that are new, ready for new experiments, for new difficulties, feeling the movement and the rush of life which renews itself in us and around us with each new generation we encounter and which must ultimately leave us—to go out and face life and death. We teachers must forever make recourse to that which is beyond and above us so that we never succumb to that sense of routine which would have us always repeat the same story, within the same walls, all with the same corpulence, those same tired and distracted faces—all indistinguishable one from the other! We must remember that we are educators as long as we recognize every instance of our work as new—and education as always a problem that demands ever new solutions.

Finally, the problem of problems in the field of education, both in antiquity and at the present, is this: the educator represents to his students the universal in the form of historically determined scientific thought, customs, law, art, religious creeds, not in so far as they are the thought, the customs, the law, the art and the creed of the teacher, but in so far as they are those of humanity, in his country and in his epoch. And the student is that particular individual who, having entered into

the educative process, becomes subject to the constraints of school, and thereby ceases to enjoy the liberty of his own research and formulation of his own patrimony or spiritual character. The student bends beneath the influence of education in general and thereby to common law. That is the source of the old repugnance to the constraints of education, and the rebellion which time and time again rises against the presumed right of the educator to intervene in the spontaneous development of a personality in search of its own path. The intervention is made on the pretext that the educator is possessed of superior value by virtue of his beliefs, his doctrine, his tastes, and his moral conscience.

It is clear that, on the one hand, education is occupied with the development of liberty for humankind. To educate is to produce human beings—and a human being is worthy of the name when he is master of himself, with the initiative and the responsibility for his own acts, with conscience and discernment with respect to those ideas he takes up, professes, affirms, propagates—that is to say all that he does, says and thinks. We believe that we have educated our children when they are grown and provide evidence that they no longer have need of our guidance and counsel. Our work as teachers is considered to be at an end when our students speak our language, and they are capable of speaking both appropriately and creatively. The goal of education is to produce [the conditions conducive to the exercise of true] liberty.

On the other hand, to educate signifies to act on the spirit of others, and not abandon them to themselves. The educator must awaken an interest in the student that he might have never sensed—turn him to a goal the value of which he might not have otherwise recognized—guide him along a path that he might not have ever trod—thereby giving him something of ourselves, to fashion a character, a mind, a will, that is something of our own spiritual substance. In such fashion, whatever the student does as a consequence of our education, would be, in some sense, our own doing. In such fashion education does not result in making the human being free, in fact it destroys in the student that liberty with which he entered the world. How often do we ascribe to the family and the environment in which the human being is raised, the responsibility or the merit for the actions of an adult?

This is the form in which the problem characteristically presents itself. The spirit of the educator vacillates between the desire and the zeal to care and guide the development of the student directly and rapidly—and the fear of suffocating creativity, to constrain with his presumptuous labor the spontaneous and personal direction of the spirit, to impose on the individual a garb that is not his own—to crush

him under the weight of a leaden cape.

The solution to this problem is to be found in the concrete concept of the individual personality—and we will seek it again in what follows. We remind the reader that our solution cannot be expected to eliminate every difficulty—like a key that opens all doors.

I have already argued that education is always problematic, and we can never claim to have the solution to all its problems—liberating ourselves from thought. Our solution is only one way, along which every person of judgment and good will might time and again solve his own problem. The problem of education will always reappear in new forms, and requires a continuous development to be found in the progressive interpretation of the concept in which we maintain that one can find his solution. We all recognize that no power of thought, at any given time, frees us from thinking, thinking always, thinking ever more intensively.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ANTINOMY OF EDUCATION

Please follow me in a more precise, more formal determination of that which I have referred to as the old and always new problem of education. That problem is identified as an "antinomy"—a conflict of two contradictory affirmations each of which appears both true and irrefutable. The two affirmations are the following: (1) the human being that is the object of education is, and should be, free; (2) education violates the liberty of human beings. One might also say: (1) education presupposes the liberty of the human being; (2) education prescinds from the liberty of human beings and works in a fashion that would divest him of his entire liberty.

All the propositions are not to be considered approximate but the exact expression of an irrefutable truth. When the talk is of liberty one should understand liberty full and absolute. When it is said that there is a negation of liberty we mean that education as such, and as much and as far as it educates, annihilates the liberty of the student.

First of all, what is this liberty that is attributed to human beings? Each of us possesses some obscure, if insistent, conception of it. Each of us, even if unfamiliar with the discussions that have attended philosophers' treatment of free will over the centuries, still have had some experience with the difficulties that surround the use of the claim that human beings enjoy free will and are really free. On the other hand, each of us has had the direct experience in life that convinces us, with a faith that is instinctive and irrepressible, that liberty survives all the doubts and negations.

By liberty we mean the peculiar power of human beings to make

of themselves what they would be, and therefore to initiate a series of events in which, and through which, they act. Within nature we conceive of all the facts in such a manner that phenomena are colligated among themselves in a universal, complex system in which no single fact constitutes the first cause because each fact is seen as having an antecedent cause or constitutes, in any event, the necessary condition of its intelligibility. The condensation of aqueous vapor in the clouds leads to rain, but vapor would not condense were it not for changes in temperature—and that would not happen had it not been for antecedent meteoric circumstances.

We believe, on the other hand, that the actions of an individual find their source in the individual himself. If we observe that the action of the individual does not have its origin in himself, but is the result of some extraneous cause affecting his character or, momentarily, his will—the action could not possess the moral value that makes it properly human, to be distinguished from the instinctive activity of the beast, or the effects of the brute power of inanimate nature.

On occasion we deny humanity to an individual, and we observe in his conduct an explosion of brutal impulse, ferocious cruelty and irrationality—moments when terms of approbation or condemnation are entirely inappropriate. On those occasions we do not even appeal to reason in dealing with such a person. To defend ourselves against his violence, nothing remains to us but violence—the same weapon that we employ against the most savage animals and the blind forces of nature. At such a point, the human being in us refuses to recognize the human being in the offending individual. A human being is considered such when we believe that he can be influenced through arguments that appeal to reason and sentiment, properties peculiar to, and the prerogatives of human beings. The reason and sentiment to which we appeal constitute the particular essence of the human personality. They cannot be imparted from without, but belong to the individual—at least in germ—at his very birth, and must subsequently be cultivated by himself. They are something that render a human being capable of consciously controlling his actions. The individual must understand his own actions in two senses—to know what it is that he does, and appreciate how his actions will be judged. In such a fashion, all the material causes which influence him have nothing to do with his behavior, which he must consider, as a human being, only in terms of his own reasoned judgments. Is there anything more natural than to react with vengeance to an affront and to arm oneself with hatred for one's enemy? Nonetheless, from the standpoint of morals, a human being is a human being in so far as he is capable of resisting the powerful passions that drive him to meet evil with evil

and hatred with hatred. The human being should pardon, should love the enemy that has done him injury. Only when he is capable of appreciating the beauty of pardon and love, will he no longer do that which is naturally expected of him—he ceases to be a natural thing and lifts himself to that superior realm, that is the domain of morality, wherein the human being must progressively exhibit his humanity. Whether or not human beings are capable of so much, we admit every human being into the society of humans with the presupposition that they are capable of so conducting themselves. We expect the human being to be [capable of freedom of choice and] not the plaything of causes external to his will and personality—that interior core from which his personality reaches out to us to affirm itself. We make these demands on him, commending him when he displays the capacity to resist those external forces which would shape his behaviors, and we condemn him when he fails. We blame him only because we are convinced that he should have had the strength to resist those extraneous material forces—and that he lacked the power to resist.

It is of no significance that we sometimes reduce the measure of blame as a consequence of compassion, or out of the humble recognition that human beings are weak. There forever remains within us the reprove, even if unspoken, of his weakness, with the conviction that he might have done more, much more, and that he should do everything possible in the future, with our help, to victoriously oppose himself to evil—and to do his duty. We cannot abandon the unhappy person, who because of his weakness—his craven cowardice or the unthinking violence of the brute—does evil. Our obligation is to care for him and help him in the belief that he can be redeemed—that he is, basically, a human being like us who has within himself the potential for a life superior to that in which he languishes.

There is a pseudo-science that, on the basis of a superficial and non-representative observation, maintains that certain forms of delinquency are the consequence of determinants over which men have no control. They are fatally condemned to remain deaf to that voice of duty that rises up irresistibly, with the least appeal from other humans, from the very profundity of their being. These are the theses of the recent school of criminal anthropology that has provided international fame to some Italian authors. Much of their luster has now faded, since practically speaking, their observations concerning the pathological quality of delinquency have not helped in the treatment of delinquency, which responds more effectively to therapies that are more rational.

Their doctrine corresponds to those systems which, at all times are driven by materialistic motives (which may at times assume

religious or teleological garb), that deny human beings that power, which is identified as liberty, and condemn them to behave as small particles in the immense sea of universal determinism, perpetually moved and agitated together with an impersonal mass of water. What power could each particle have to resist the force of the wave that carried it forward? Thus human beings, every human being, from the time of his birth and his death, confined in the midst of all the being of nature, feeling the effects of all these concurrent factors, would be driven and tossed from moment to moment by the powerful currents immanent in the universe. At times, the individual may imagine that his consciousness might lift itself above those forces, to resist them, to arrest them and dominate them, to employ them in the service of his own destiny. But his belief is a delusion, itself the fatal effect of the unconscious play of those representations that are themselves the effects of external forces.

It is not our purpose here to criticize those arguments with which, in the systems to which we have referred, it is held that one can imagine human beings without liberty. For our present purposes, one observation is enough to truncate the entire discussion. A great German philosopher (Immanuel Kant), who conceived a notion of science and reality which treated science as object, to the exclusion of a way to treat reality as a place in which human beings could have liberty, made a place for liberty—irrespective of all the difficulties that science encounters in the effort to make a place for it—because finding such a place is a postulate of our moral conscience. What that signifies is that whatever our ideas and whatever the theories of science, we have also a conscience, which imposes on us a law—a law which, without having been promulgated and established by an exterior force, is for us absolute—a moral law. It is a law that does not require a speculative rationale. In fact, the arguments of philosophers are only of relative service in its support—since the moral law arises spontaneously from the very depths of our spirit, and demands from our will, even from the most uncultivated among us, unconditional respect. The fact of the matter is, what could the significance of the word duty be, if the human being could only do that which his nature, or worst still, what external nature, compels him to do? When it is said that someone must, that implies that he can. The indefensible conviction we have that we can properly be expected to perform our duty, implies with equal certainty that we can perform that duty: that is to say, it implies we are free to do, or not do, our duty.

However important, such a reflection is not sufficient to solve our problem. One might argue that this certitude we have of a moral consciousness, and the notion that we are charged with a duty from

which we cannot escape—could that not be an illusion? Nothing makes such a thought self-contradictory. Skeptics and naturalistic philosophers accept just such notions.

Liberty is not only necessary to sustain our conception of moral obligation—liberty is not only the condition (ratio essendi) of moral law, as imagined by Kant. Liberty is the necessary condition for the life of the spirit. The materialist who would believe that he might reject freedom as the condition of morality—imagining it possible to continue to think, renouncing any thought of objective value, or in the reality of a moral law—deludes himself. Without liberty human beings could no longer speak of duty—in fact, they could no longer speak—much less articulate their materialistic views. The denial of liberty is literally unthinkable.

Some brief reflections will make this evident. We speak to others or to ourselves, in so far as we think, saying something and formulating propositions. Let us suppose that the ideas we have in mind (as it is sometimes alleged) are unobserved. Such ideas would not have presented themselves to consciousness, just as objects toward which we do not turn our gaze, would remain unknown to us. Every object, that is to say, every thought we have in mind, is not thought unless it is in mind. We must be there, in the form of mental activity. Each of us must be there as a thinking human being, the subject who is prepared to affirm the object. Thought consists precisely in the affirmation of the object by the subject. It must be noted that the subject, that is to say the human being, must be free in making such affirmation in thought, just as he must be free in any action which is truly his and thereby truly human. We expect of a human being that he be responsible for his thought—just as he is responsible for his actions. We often make persons responsible for their thoughts when we judge that they ought not think such thoughts. We thereby demonstrate that we are convinced that the thought of each of us is not only the logical consequence of certain premises, or an effect of a psychic mechanism put in motion by the universal mechanisms of which the individual psyche finds itself a part. The thought of the individual is not subject to premises he cannot modify once they are accepted. We are masters of our thoughts—illustrated not only by the vigor with which the human personality pursues the demands of a difficult and arduous practical life, but also the agility, readiness, assiduity, and dispassionate love of truth, with which we prosecute our research for the truth.

It has been said that human cognition has its own moral value, and that the will intervenes in the work of the intellect. Such a distinction is perilous. Whether we call it will or intellect, the activity

which makes us what we are, by which we actualize our personality—it is certain that it is conscious and discriminating activity, not like a weight falling on an object. Our conscious activity involves conscious freedom. Just as every action turns to the good because something appears good as opposed to evil, thus every cognition is an affirmation of a truth, that is or seems to be such, in opposition to error and falsehood. Without the antithesis of good to evil, there would be no moral action. Similarly without the antithesis of truth to falsity there would be no knowing. The antitheses [between good and evil and truth and falsehood] imply choice and thereby a freedom to choose.

Should we deny the freedom to choose, abandoning the human being to the causes which act on him, the consequence would be that no distinction could be made between good and evil or between that which is true and that which is false. Thus, the materialist, who would deny freedom to the human being would not only find himself without a basis for attributing value that the moral conscience assigns to the good—but equally without the grounds for attributing value to truth. He must convince himself that he has no reason for thinking what he does—rendering the entire process impossible.

The negation of freedom leads to just such absurdity—to the unpossessable notion that this impossible thought, which is being thought—is a thought which cannot admit of being thought. The human being in so far as he thinks affirms his faith in liberty—and every effort he makes to extirpate such a faith from his soul, is its most flagrant confirmation. Properly understood, this observation is sufficient to secure the irreducible foundation on which human liberty rests.

Nor is it the case that the liberty necessary for human beings to be human, is or can be, as some have thought, a relative liberty, governed by certain conditions. A conditional liberty is [tantamount to] slavery. That is the central issue. To admit a relative liberty is to open the issue to questions of how much or how little liberty there might be. But freedom is either absolute or it is nothing. Matter is not free—every material thing is not free, precisely because it is limited. The spirit—in every one of its acts—is free because it is infinite, not relative to any thing because it is absolute.

Once the spirit is limited, liberty is annihilated. The slave is not free is so far as his will is circumscribed by limits imposed upon it by his master. The human spirit is not free in the face of nature, because nature confines it to narrow limits, within which only that development is permitted that nature itself allows. It is rather a development to which nature condemns the spirit, because the spirit is thus confined to a circumscribed range of activity. The lower animal is

not free because even if its behavior appears to share rationality with human beings—it follows a rectilinearity and a pre-established line of instinctual conduct that does not permit any individual originality or creativity. Whoever speaks of limit, alludes to that which limits and that which is limited—a necessary relationship the one with the other. It is impossible for the limited to escape the consequences of that relationship—which means, in sum, that it is impossible for the limited to be everything—that it must remain within its limits, observing the inviolable laws of its nature. The necessity that ties every natural being to the laws of its own nature is that which renders each that which it is—a wolf is born a wolf, a lamb a lamb—that is the hard determinism of natural beings. That is the determinism from which man is ransomed by the powerful force of his liberty.

Thus the sculptor, in the fervor of divine inspiration, seeks marble, out of which his chisel might form, in the very bosom of nature, the idol of his dream. He searches and fails to find that which he seeks—and his chisel can only remain idle. The artist is frustrated in his effort by an extrinsic natural impediment—which seems to limit his creative power. When we consider what the artist creates in the statue, the living image he has imposed on the white marble, we recognize in it nothing material, only the idea, the sentiment, the soul of the artist—the apparent limits to the creative power of the artist disappear. There is no longer the fantasy of the artist, and then his arm, his hand, and his chisel, and the block of stone on which he labors—we perceive only the creative fantasy, taking wing in that infinite world of the artist, with his arm, hand and marble and his universe entirely different from the universe in which men live who quarry marble in the hills, transport and sell it.

There is a point of view from which the spirit appears limited, and therefore servant of the conditions in which its life is spent. There is also a higher point of view to which we must accede if we would discover our liberty. Should we distinguish—as is common in psychology—between the soul, body, sensation, movement, thought and the external world, we really would have no way of conceiving the spirit as anything other than as something conditioned by the physical externalities to which its internal determinations must somehow correspond. It is impossible to see without eyes and without light. It is equally impossible not to see when one has eyes and objects are illumined—and given the wave frequencies, it is impossible not to see one or another color. The objects seen will determine our thoughts, and according to that which is thought, our volition will be shaped, to forge in us this or that character. We shall be this or that human being in conformity with prevailing circumstances. In such a conception, a

human being is made up of contingencies, a child of his place and time, of the society around him. He cannot be the product of his own making—but of everything else—his time, his place, his environment.

But there is that superior point of view, to which I have already alluded, that one must attain if one would really understand this stupendous human nature that was revealed to our consciousness by Christianity, and which has increasingly manifested itself in the course of the modern era, making the human being aware of his own dignity, superior to that of nature which he increasingly subjects to his will the more he achieves understanding. Nature is bent to his will and employed to achieve goals which he chooses. Human beings do not cease their efforts irrespective of the obstacles nature places in their path.

Whoever says that there are two things—the soul and the body, two things, one outside the other—does not consider that these two things are distinguished in thought by thought itself, that is to say the distinction is made in the soul itself. The soul is more true than the body because the soul thinks, and therefore the soul thinks and reveals its nature by its intrinsic acts. Things reveal themselves only as the objects of thought, as a thing thought, and as things thought may be delusions, figments of imagination (ens rationis). Many things thought have shown themselves to be inconsistent, without substance—fictions. Whoever speaks of sensation and movement which generates or conditions, in whatever manner, sensation, forgets that sensation itself is a determination of consciousness, just as movement, which is something one may also encounter in consciousness—[the difference being that one thinks of movement] when one thinks of the displacement of things in space.

Everything must remain within [the circumference of] consciousness. There is no way to escape that reality—because if we would choose to say that outside or around consciousness there is the brain, which is enclosed in the cranium, which in turn is enveloped by a space filled with luminous air and populated by a congress of flora and fauna—we would have to concede that all of that is conceived in thought, within consciousness, to which it remains external and dependent. Think—keep in mind the indestructible substance of your thought—and from the center of that thought, of which we are the subject, advance, proceed forward, always advancing toward an ever receding horizon. Is there any point at which one would be prepared to say, “Here my thought ends and here begins something else?” Thought cannot stop other than before a mystery. But having thought of that mystery, thought transforms it in the thinking, and proceeds, after a pause, without ever really stopping.

That is the life of the spirit. It is for that reason we have spoken of the spirit as universal. In its travels through the infinite, it finds nothing other than that which it fashions spiritually. In this life, when viewed from within, and not abstracted, conceived with a materialistic imagination, the spirit, we reiterate, is free because infinite.

Does education presuppose this kind of liberty on the part of the student? Certainly, because the student is conceived of as educable—and the student would not be educable if incapable of thinking (and understanding that which he is told). And to think, we have argued, is what freedom means.

Not only is freedom presupposed by the educator, but it is the very thing he seeks to develop in trying to enhance the capacity to think and every other manner of spiritual undertaking. The development of thought is the development of reflection, of man's control over his ideas, over the content of his own consciousness, over his own proper being in relationship to every other being. The educator's work, in effect, is the development of liberty. Someone has said that education, in point of fact, consists in the liberation of the individual from instinct. Certainly, education is the formation of the human being—and whoever says human being, says freedom.

Out of this arises the antinomy. How does one reconcile the presupposition of freedom being intrinsic to the student, and the intention of the educator to foster freedom, with the intervention of the educator in the personality of the student? The interposition of the educator means that the student will not be left to himself, to his own powers, but must encounter another different from himself. Education requires a duality: the educator and the student. It is the liberty of the student that suffers because of that duality, which implies limits, and thereby annuls the infinity in which true freedom consists. The student who finds himself confronted by a will stronger than his own to which he must submit, an intelligence armed by experience, that forestalls his own powers of observation and his zeal for his own experience, conceives the more powerful personality of the educator as a barrier that impedes the student's way toward a goal—toward which the student would have preferred to spontaneously and independently proceed—or he might imagine the educator providing a goal along a way that the student would have chosen of his own accord, along which he would have preferred to advance freely, joyfully, without compulsion. The student would have preferred to be left alone, to be free—as was God, when the world was not, and He created it out of nothing, by joyous fiat, symbol of the highest spiritual liberty.

For these considerations we have held that the major problem of education is that involving the relationship between the freedom of the

student and the authority of the teacher. For that reason the great writers, who meditated on the questions of education, from Rousseau to Tolstoy, exalting the right of liberty, chose the extreme of denying the right of authority, to advocate a vague and intangible ideal of negative education.

We do not need to deny anything. We would construct rather than destroy. The school—this glorious legacy of human experience, this hearth which, throughout the millennia, has never been without the fire of the increasing human need to sublimate life through constant criticism and with inextinguishable love—may be transformed with time, but never destroyed. Let the schools remain, and let the teacher remain in his position, with his authority and with the limitations he places on the spontaneity and the liberty of the student. Those limitations, we would argue, are only apparent.

It is apparent if we are concerned with true education. A great injustice has weighed for centuries on the schools, viewed as prisons and places of torment, and on the teachers, scourged without pity by satirists as pedants. The schools have been charged with faults not of their own making, and teachers, genuine educators, have been identified as pedants—pedants who represent the very opposite of intelligent instruction and violative of every ethical inspiration of true educators, genuine teachers.

To determine whether education really limits the free activity of the student, it is ill-advised to observe any school whatever, in the abstract, which may or not be a school. Rather, one must examine an institution at that time when it succeeds in being a school, when the teacher teaches and the scholars learn. Such a time, even if only hypothetical, must be conceivable.

Let us imagine a teacher conducting lessons in Italian. The Italian language? Where is it to be found? In the grammar text or the dictionary? Yes—but only if the exposition of grammar can invest its rules with the vitality of examples of language spoken—and if the dictionary does not desiccate every word in the aridity of alphabetical abstraction—but employs the words in complete phrases, meaningful utterances of great authors or the common speech of the people. Only if the grammar text and the dictionary do not tear rules and words from the living body of language in which they originated and in which they will be joined again in the vibrancy of life and expressiveness. But more than in the grammar and the dictionary, language is in the writers themselves, now reading one and now another, each of whom knew how to most powerfully express our thoughts. The educator reads, and with him read the students. Thus they learn to know the language. They read Leopardi: the words of Leopardi, his soul, which with the

reading of the teacher, expands throughout the school, combines in the soul of the students, quieting every other sentiment, and taking the place of any other thought. In each, the words of Leopardi throb, moves them, and arouses them. Each comes to know a Leopardi of his own, flesh of his flesh. In knowing his Leopardi the student experiences one of the finest moments of his life. His blood courses warm in his veins, and his life is full and made more lofty. Does anyone who hears within himself the echoes of the language of Leopardi, imagine that he hears the echo of an echo? The results of a language spoken after once spoken by the poet? Experience tells us that is not the case. Should anyone become distracted and no longer remain enraptured by the words of the poet, and imagine that the words they hear are not their own but those of the teacher, or rather, the words of the poet, they would be making a serious mistake—because that which is heard deep within oneself is one's own, entirely one's own. Leopardi cannot communicate poetry to those who cannot live in their own lives the love, and the intensity of sentiment of poetry. When they can so experience the poetry of Leopardi, Leopardi (or the teacher who presents him) no longer is a Leopardi materially external to the listener or the reader, but is his own Leopardi—the Leopardi he is able to fashion for himself. [In such circumstances,] the teacher is no longer external to the student. As St. Augustine long ago informed us, the teacher has become part of us.

He is within, even if we see him before us, there, at his lectern. Even there, he is part of us, object of our consciousness, uplifted within our soul, and possessed of our reverence, our faith, and our affection. He is our teacher, our very soul.

The duality of teacher and student is only apparent in education. First of all there is education, and then the antinomy makes its appearance. But the antinomy is resolved by education itself, from the moment that the teacher speaks the first word that reaches the soul of the student.

The duality remains should the words of the teacher fail to reach the soul of the student. Under those circumstances, there is no education. But even under such circumstances, if the teacher is not completely inept, the barrier between the two works in favor of the spiritual development of the student. The ineptitude of the teacher, insufficient for the purposes of education, leads the student—motivated by the irrepressible liberty of his nature—to affirm his own personality with increased vigor. In spite of the inadequacies, or the intention, of the teacher, the school remains the hearth of liberty. A school that is not free, is an institution that is lifeless.

Last Testament of Benito Mussolini
(1945)

(The following texts are Benito Mussolini's testament and final thoughts. They were written on April 27, 1945—the day on which Mussolini was captured by communist partisans. On the following day he was executed without trial.)

No true Italian, whatever his political faith, should despair of the future. The resources of our people are immense. If we are able to find a common ground, we will regain our strength before any victor. For this common ground, I would give my life even now, willingly, so long as it is truly marked with real Italian spirit. After defeat, I will be furiously covered by spit, but later I will be cleansed with veneration. Then I will smile, because my people will be at peace with themselves.

The worker who fulfills his social duty with no other hope than a piece of bread and the health of his family repeats, on a daily basis, an act of heroism. Labourers are infinitely superior to all false prophets who pretend to represent them. These false prophets have an easy time of it due to the insensitivity of those who have the sacrosanct duty of taking care of labourers. It is for this reason that I was, and am, a socialist.

The accusation of inconsistency is without foundation. My behaviour has always been consistent in the sense of looking to the substance, not the appearance of things. I have adapted myself, socialistically, to reality. As the natural development of society proved more and more of Marx's predictions to be wrong, true socialism retreated from the possible to the probable. The only feasible socialism that can be truly implemented is Corporativism—a merging point, a place of equilibrium and justice, with respect for collective interests.

The art of politics is very difficult, amongst the most difficult, because it works on matter that cannot be grasped, that wobbles and is more uncertain. Politics works on the spirit of men, which is much more difficult to define because it is subject to change. Most changeable of all is the spirit of Italians. When I am gone, I am sure that historians and psychologists will ask themselves how a single man was able to successfully lead a people like the Italian people. If I had accomplished nothing else, this single work of art would have been sufficient to prevent me from being forgotten. Others have been able to dominate with iron fists, not with consensus and agreement as I managed. My dictatorship was much milder than many democracies that are run by plutocracies. Fascism lost more men than its adversaries, and on 25th of July there were no more than thirty persons

in exile.

When it is written that we are the white guard for the bourgeoisie, it is the vilest of lies. I defended, and I state this with full conviction, workers' progress. Amongst the principal causes for the fall of Fascism I blame the deaf and merciless fight of certain financial and industrial groups who, in their mad egoism, feared and hated Fascism as the worst enemy of their inhuman interests. I must say for the purpose of justice, that Italian capital, the part which is legitimate and holds itself up with the ability of its industry, has always understood the needs of society, even when they required sacrifice to address new labour terms. The humble folk of labour have always loved me and love me still.

All dictators have always made slaughter of their enemies. I have been the only mild one: a few hundred dead against several thousand. I believe I've ennobled dictatorship. Perhaps I emasculated it, but I rid it of instruments of torture. Stalin sits on a mountain of human bones. Is this bad? I don't regret to have done all the good I've done, even to my adversaries, even enemies who plotted against my life. I've done this through the provision of subsidies that were so frequent as to become stipends, as well as by saving their lives. But if tomorrow they will kill my men, what responsibility will I have for having spared them?

Stalin is left standing and wins; I fall and lose. History only concerns itself with victors and the volume of their conquests; triumph justifies everything. The French Revolution is studied for its outcomes, while those who died with the guillotine are relegated to the obituaries.

Nobody will be able to erase twenty years of Fascism from Italy's history. I have no illusion regarding my fate. They will not give me a trial, because they know that from a defendant I would become a prosecutor. They will probably murder me and then claim that I committed suicide, overcome by remorse. He who fears death has never lived, and I have lived, perhaps even too much. Life is nothing more than an intersection between two eternities: the past and the future. As long as my star shone, I was enough for all. Now that it fades, everybody is not enough for me. I will go where destiny will want me because I always did what fate requested of me.

Fascists who will remain faithful to principles will need to be exemplary citizens. They must respect the laws that the people will give, and cooperate loyally with legitimate authorities to help them heal, as quickly as possible, the fatherland's wounds. Whomever will behave differently will demonstrate the he no longer supports the fatherland when he has to serve it from below. Fascists, in other words, will have to act out of passion, not resentment. From their

behaviour will depend a speedier historical rehabilitation of Fascism. Because now it is night, but later, day will break.

Benito Mussolini

Last Thoughts of the Duce
(1945)

It is not the faith that arrives at the moment of death which sustains me, it is the faith of my childhood and of my life which demands that I must believe, even if I might have reason to doubt. I don't know if the Italian people will ever read these notes of mine. I would like to believe they will, to give them the opportunity to accept my last thought as a confession of faith. I also don't know if men will provide me with sufficient time to finish writing. Twenty-two years of governing do not make me, by human judgment, worthy of living another twenty-four hours.

I believed in the victory of our arms, as I believe in God, our Lord, but even more I believe in the eternal. Now defeat provides the test-bench upon which we must show the whole world the strength and enormity of our hearts. It is now a fact that the war is lost, but it is also certain that one is not defeated until one calls oneself defeated. This Italians will need to remember, if, under foreign domination, they begin to feel the undeniable awakening of their spirits and their conscience.

Today I forgive those who don't forgive me and condemn me, thereby condemning themselves. I think of all those to whom it will be denied for years to love and suffer for the fatherland, and I would like them to feel not only witnesses of a defeat, but also bearers of a rebirth. After the time of terrible hate and revenge, there will be the time of reason. Thus, the sense of dignity and honour will be regained and I am certain that the Italians of tomorrow will be able to evaluate, serenely, the causes of the tragic hour that I am living. If this is the last day of my existence, I want to extend my forgiveness even to those who abandoned me and those who betrayed me, much as I have forgiven the king for his weakness.

Benito Mussolini